



## British Society of GI and Abdominal Radiology

### Fistulogram / Sinogram

#### Patient Information Leaflet

#### Introduction

This leaflet tells you about a Fistulogram or Sinogram. It explains how the test is done, what to expect, and the risks involved. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for such a discussion.

#### What is a Fistulogram / Sinogram?

A Fistulogram or Sinogram is an X-ray examination done to view an abnormal passage opening onto the skin surface. Contrast (X-ray dye) introduced through a small tube is used to visualize the start and end of the fistula or sinus on X-rays, to track the path of the fistula / sinus and identify any organs involved.

#### What do I have to do before my Fistulogram / Sinogram?

You may eat and drink normally before your Fistulogram/Sinogram and can continue to take all your normal medications.

#### Females

Females are asked to contact the Radiology department if you suspect that you may be pregnant OR if the appointment is more than 10 days after the *start* of your last period.

This test uses radiation and there is a risk to the unborn baby if we were to do the X-rays when you are pregnant. When you arrive for your test, you will be asked when your last period started. If it is more than 10 days earlier, your appointment will be postponed.

#### Allergy to iodine or contrast medium

You should inform us in advance if you have a known allergy to iodine or intravenous contrast material (X-ray dye). Your doctor may prescribe medications prior to the examination to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction.

#### Where do I go when I arrive at the hospital?

Please report to the reception desk in the Radiology department with your appointment letter 10 minutes before your appointment time. You will be asked to sit in the waiting area until called by a member of staff.

A member of the team will explain the test and answer any questions. If you have to undress for the procedure, you will be shown to a private cubicle and asked to change into a clean gown. You will be asked to remove all jewellery and metal from the area to be examined. Your clothes and valuables will be secured in a locker until after the procedure.

### **Can I bring a relative/friend?**

You may bring a relative or friend with you to the appointment but, as the examination uses x-rays, for reasons of safety they will not be able to accompany you into the examination room, except in very special circumstances. If the patient is a young child or is un-cooperative, a parent or health worker may stay in the room, but will be required to wear a protective lead apron.

If you need an interpreter please tell us when you receive your appointment so that we can arrange this.

### **What happens during the Procedure?**

You will be taken into the screening/fluoroscopy room and asked to lie down on the fluoroscopy table. The fluoroscopy equipment uses x-rays to obtain real-time moving images of the body. A small beam of continuous x-rays passes through the body to an image intensifier, which is suspended over the X-ray table. The sequence of images produced can be viewed on a computer monitor.

X-ray pictures are taken of the fistula/sinus area. Your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and a small tube is then gently inserted into the opening of the fistula/sinus. A small amount of contrast (X-ray dye) is injected into the fistula/sinus through the tube while x-ray pictures are taken. You may be asked to lie in different positions whilst the images are taken.

The procedure will be performed by a Radiologist, who is a doctor specially trained to carry out complex imaging examinations and to interpret the images. The Radiologist is helped by a Radiographer, who is a professional trained to carry out X-rays and other imaging examinations.

The examination takes about 30 minutes or so to complete.

### **What happens after the test?**

At the end of the test the tube is removed and a small dressing applied. If you normally use a stoma bag please bring a spare bag with you. You will then be able to leave immediately.

In the week after the test if you notice any symptoms of an infection, such as pain at the site of the fistula/sinus, a temperature or feeling unwell, you should contact your GP for advice.

### **Are there any risks?**

Fluoroscopy involves the use of X-rays. There are strict guidelines in place for the use of x-rays in diagnosing medical conditions so fluoroscopic examinations can only be performed at the request of a Doctor. We will keep the radiation dose as low as we possibly can. Women who are or might be pregnant must inform a member of staff in advance.

You may experience slight discomfort during the procedure but it should not be painful. Minor bleeding can occur from the sinus / fistula. The risk of infection is small.

The risk of serious allergic reaction to contrast materials used for a sinogram is uncommon, and radiology departments are well-equipped to deal with this.

Perforation of the fistula/sinus opening is rare. This may require surgery and/or antibiotics.

Despite these slight risks, your doctor believes it is advisable that you should have this examination, and do bear in mind there are greater risks from missing a serious disorder by *not* having your scan.

### **How do I get my results?**

The Radiologist will review the images from your Fistulogram / Sinogram and send a report to your doctor. Your GP or hospital Consultant who referred you for the test will see you to discuss the results.

In some cases the Radiologist may discuss the findings with you at the end of the procedure.

### **Any further questions?**

We will do our best to make your visit as comfortable and stress free as possible. If you have any further questions, or suggestions for us, please let us know. If you would prefer information and advice in another language, please contact the Radiology department.

## **Further Information**

For general information about Radiology departments, visit The Royal College of Radiologists' website: [www.goingfora.com](http://www.goingfora.com)

For information about the effects of x-rays read the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) publication: 'X-rays how safe are they?' on the website: [http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb\\_C/1194947388410](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947388410)

For health advice or information you can call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit the website: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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