



Fistulogram

Information for patients from the Interventional Radiology Team and the Renal Dialysis Access Team

You have been referred to the hospital for a Fistulogram. This leaflet explains the following.

- What a Fistulogram is.
- Why you need a Fistulogram.
- How to prepare for your Fistulogram.
- What happens before, during, and after your Fistulogram.
- What the possible risks are.
- What to do if you have any questions.

We hope this leaflet answers some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

What is a Fistulogram?

A Fistulogram is an examination of the blood vessels that make up your fistula / graft.

A small needle is placed in your fistula / graft, and dye (contrast agent) is injected. This dye provides an image (like a map) of your blood vessels, that cannot be seen on an x-ray.

Why do I need a Fistulogram?

Your doctor / dialysis nurse feels there may be a problem with your dialysis fistula / graft. A Fistulogram is the best way to diagnose this problem.

To help decide how to approach this problem, you may have already had an ultrasound scan or transonic on dialysis to assess the flow in your fistula.

Who has made the decision?

Your renal doctor, the renal access nurse, and the interventional radiologist will have discussed your care. They will have decided that a Fistulogram is the most appropriate next step. However, you will have the opportunity for your opinion to be considered. If after discussion with your doctors, you no longer want the procedure you can decide against it.

What are the risks to having a Fistulogram?

A Fistulogram is a very safe procedure, but some risks and complications can happen.

- Very occasionally, a small bruise can appear at the site of the needle puncture.
- Ongoing bleeding in this area can lead to a short stay in hospital. This happens in 1 in every 100 cases.
- Very rarely, damage to the fistula can happen. This may need further treatment by an interventional radiologist or a small operation.
- The risk of infection is very low.

Do I need to stop any medication before my procedure?

Take your normal medication on the day of your procedure, unless told otherwise by staff.

Do I need to make any special preparations before my procedure?

A Fistulogram is performed during an outpatient appointment. You will be asked to come to the X-ray Department at Kent and Canterbury Hospital. Please see your appointment letter for more details.

At least a week before your procedure, please call the Renal Access team on 01227 864305 if:

- you have any allergies; or
- have previously had a reaction to the dye (contrast agent),

We can give you medicine to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction and use a different dye.

How long will it take?

Every patient is different, but expect to be in the department for 1 hour. There may be a delay if urgent cases take priority on the day.

Who will I see?

A specially trained team led by an interventional radiologist, will see you at your appointment. They have expertise in:

- reading the images; and
- using imaging to guide catheters and wires to help with diagnosis and treatment.

Where will my procedure take place?

You will have your procedure in the theatre department, where specialised x-ray equipment has been installed.

What happens during my procedure?

- You will be asked to lie down.
- The skin over the area of your fistula / graft will be swabbed with an antiseptic.
- A needle, often followed by a fine plastic tube, is placed in your fistula / graft and dye injected.
- You will be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds, while the images are taken.

Will it hurt?

The needle insertion may cause a little discomfort, like having a blood test taken.

What happens after my procedure?

To prevent bleeding, light pressure is applied for a few minutes to the area where the needle / plastic tube was placed.

You can usually go home 30 minutes after a Fistulogram.

You will discuss the results of your Fistulogram with your renal doctor.

Your renal access nurse will telephone you if you need any further procedures, such as a Fistuloplasty.

Is it safe to have this procedure before / after haemodialysis?

Yes, the procedure will not interfere with your haemodialysis treatment.

What if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Renal Dialysis Access Team.

- **Renal Dialysis Access Team**
Telephone 01227 864305, Monday to Friday 8am to 4.30pm

What do you think of this leaflet?

We welcome feedback, whether positive or negative, as it helps us to improve our care and services.

If you would like to give us feedback about this leaflet, please fill in our short online survey. Either scan the QR code below, or use the web link. We do not record your personal information, unless you provide contact details and would like to talk to us some more.

Giving feedback about this leaflet



<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MDOBU4/>

If you would rather talk to someone instead of filling in a survey, please call the Patient Voice Team.

- **Patient Voice Team**

Telephone: 01227 868605

Email (ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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