

Imaging department

Arranging your hysterosalpingogram (HSG)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Please note, it is very important that you read this leaflet BEFORE booking the appointment for your hysterosalpingogram (HSG).

As part of your investigations, you have been asked to have a hysterosalpingogram (HSG), a special x-ray examination of your uterus (womb) and fallopian tubes. This leaflet explains what an HSG is and what to expect during and after the procedure.

What is an HSG?

An HSG is a special x-ray examination of your uterus (womb) and fallopian tubes. There are two fallopian tubes, one on each side of the uterus and they are responsible for transporting the egg from the ovary to the womb.

Why are HSGs performed?

An HSG is often requested as part of fertility or recurrent miscarriage investigations. It can help to identify blockages or damage in the fallopian tubes and diagnose fibroids, polyps, scar tissue and other problems in the uterus.

When is an HSG performed?

Your cycle starts on the first day of your period. The HSG is usually done between day 6 and 15 of your cycle but **not** while you are still bleeding. Special arrangements are made if you have a very long or irregular cycles, or no periods at all.

Please note that we will not be able to perform the procedure if there is any possibility that you may be pregnant. **Therefore, it is important that you do not have sexual intercourse from the first day of your period until after the HSG has been done.** If you have sexual intercourse after your period has started, it may not be possible to perform the HSG.

How can I book my appointment?

On the first day of your cycle/period (or Monday after a weekend), please telephone the imaging department to make an appointment.

If you are an NHS patient, the number to call to arrange your HSG is **020 3313 8560**

If you are a private patient, the number to call to arrange your HSG is **020 3313 4792**

If you are still bleeding on the morning of your HSG appointment, please call the imaging department on **020 3313 0077** as the procedure will need to be rearranged.

What happens during the appointment?

Your HSG will be done in the **imaging (radiology/x-ray) department** on the **first floor** of **A Block, Hammersmith Hospital**.

When you arrive at the imaging department, please let the reception staff know.

- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown
- A sample pot will be given to you for a urine sample for a pregnancy test
- You will be shown to the examination room
- The doctor or nurse performing the HSG will explain the procedure to you in detail and answer any questions you may have
- The examination is similar to a smear test. The doctor or nurse will pass a speculum into the vagina and a special thin, soft catheter (tube) into your cervix (neck of womb).
- A clear fluid (contrast) which shows up on x-rays will then be passed into the uterus through the catheter
- X-ray pictures will be taken as the fluid fills the uterus and fallopian tubes

The procedure usually takes between 10 and 20 minutes.

Will it hurt?

You may find the procedure uncomfortable and experience mild, period-like cramps.

What Contrast fluid is used during the HSG?

The contrast used during an HSG is an iodine-based fluid. There are two types of contrast fluid that can be used: oil-based or water-based. The choice of which fluid is used will depend on your history and the reasons your doctor has referred you for the test.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be able to go home or back to work straight after the procedure depending on how you feel.

Mild cramping may continue for two to three hours after the procedure. If necessary, you can take some painkillers.

Some of the clear fluid that was used during the procedure may run out afterwards and you may notice some light vaginal bleeding or spotting. This is normal and is nothing to worry about. You will be given a sanitary pad and should continue to use pads or panty liners if necessary. Please do not use tampons on the day of the procedure as they slightly increase the risk of infection.

Is there anything I need to watch out for at home?

You should contact your referring consultant, GP or go to your nearest A&E if you experience any of the following:

- a raised temperature or fever
- persistent heavy bleeding
- offensive or smelly vaginal discharge
- severe or increasing pain that does not go away with regular painkillers

Are there any risks involved in having this procedure?

Everything possible will be done to ensure your safety and comfort but as with all medical procedures there are risks. The doctor/nurse undertaking the procedure will discuss these with you

- There is a small risk of infection after the procedure and so we prescribe antibiotics to minimise this risk
- There is an extremely small risk of an allergic reaction to the contrast used. If you experience a rash, itching or swelling after the examination, please contact your GP or NHS 111
- On very rare occasions, the contrast fluid might enter the blood vessels in the uterus. The study will be stopped should this happen. We only inject the liquid under direct visualisation to minimise this risk
- The oil-based contrast can stay in the pelvis for a few weeks. This is not harmful and is eventually absorbed
- Granuloma formation - in extremely rare circumstances the oil-based liquid may not be absorbed, and something called a granuloma can form. This is rarely a problem and very rarely may require surgery for removal
- Rarely, the iodine in the contrast can affect the thyroid gland. The test will not be undertaken if we know you have abnormal or untreated thyroid problems

Are there any alternatives to this test?

Your doctor will only have requested an HSG if they feel that this is the best way to find out more information about your condition. An alternative may be to have a HyCoSy (a special type of ultrasound examination), a laparoscopy or a hysteroscopy. Your doctor will discuss this with you.

What happens if I decide not to have the hysterosalpingogram?

You will be referred back to the doctor who recommended the HSG to discuss further.

Research

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust is an Academic Health Science Centre. We are a research active site. You may be approached about research trials that you could be eligible for. All research is voluntary and your decision to participate or not will not affect your clinical care.

How do I get to the hospital?

Please visit the Trust's website for more information about travelling to our hospitals:
www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations

Contact details

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have queries or concerns:

- **Imaging department: 020 3313 3389**

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk