



Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

Sialogram



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What is a sialogram?

A sialogram is an X-ray examination of your salivary glands and ducts. To make them visible on the X-ray images we use a colourless dye. The dye is passed through a small tube into the duct opening in your mouth.

What is it for?

A sialogram is used to detect abnormalities within the salivary gland and ducts. These most commonly include stones and strictures (narrowings).

What are the benefits of having a sialogram?

It provides information about the structure of your salivary gland and ducts and will also show if there are any stones present or a stricture (narrowing of the duct).

Are there any alternatives?

The salivary glands may also be examined with an ultrasound or MRI scan. Your doctor will advise the most suitable test for you based on your symptoms.

What will happen if I don't have it?

Your doctor may be unable to diagnose the cause of your symptoms.

Is it suitable for everyone?

Female patients who are or might be pregnant must inform a member of staff in advance.

Are there any risks?

All X-ray procedures involve exposure to

radiation in varying amounts, which may add very slightly to the risk of developing cancer. The length and level of exposure to radiation from X-rays in medical procedures is strictly controlled and kept to the minimum possible. There is far greater risk by not having this investigation.

There is a very small chance of infection, although we minimise this by using sterile equipment throughout the procedure.

There is an extremely small risk of allergy to the X-ray contrast (dye). Please tell us if you have had a serious reaction to X-ray contrast in the past.

How do I prepare for this examination?

No preparation is necessary although please remove any necklaces or earrings beforehand if possible.

Who will I see?

A radiologist or advanced practitioner will be present during the examination.

What will happen?

You may need to have some plain X-rays taken of your face and mouth before your examination. If this is necessary it will be indicated on your appointment letter.

You will need to remove any items of jewellery from the area around your neck and any piercings in your ears and face.

1. You will be asked to lie flat on the X-ray table.

2. You will be asked to rinse your mouth with a small amount of liquid (similar to lemon juice). This makes you salivate and the salivary duct inside your mouth more visible.
3. A small tube is then placed into the duct.
4. The X-ray dye is passed from a syringe through this tube into your salivary duct.
5. X-rays are then taken at different angles. These are displayed on a monitor and then stored digitally.
6. Occasionally we are unable to perform the examination because the duct is too small to find or get the tube into. The specialist who performs the study will give you more information if this happens.
7. A final X-ray is then taken.

Will it be uncomfortable?

You may experience some discomfort and mild swelling when the dye is injected, similar to the symptoms that caused you to see the doctor.

How long will it take?

The examination takes 15-20 minutes, a bit longer if preliminary X-rays are required. Occasionally the opening of the duct is hard to find or it can sometimes be difficult to place the tube in small ducts, which may cause the procedure to take a little longer.

Are there any after effects?

Although some people have some discomfort, this is not likely to persist.

When will I get my results?

The radiologist or advanced practitioner who performed the test will write to the doctor who requested the examination as soon as possible.

You should receive an appointment to see the doctor again, if you do not already have one booked.

Further information

If you have any questions about the examination, or need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at the Radiography department on: 01872 252338.

What if I can't attend?

If you need to change your appointment contact the X-ray department clerk on 01872 252290.

About your consent

Before we carry out any examination or treatment we will need your permission – this is known as consent. Before the examination starts we will explain what is involved and what we hope to gain from it. We will then ask for your consent to continue. For some procedures it may be necessary to sign a consent form, if this is the case we will discuss it with you.

If you change your mind about having the examination or treatment, you can withdraw your consent at any time no matter how you gave it. Everything discussed between you and the member of staff will remain confidential.

If you would like further information about consent or confidentiality, please read our information leaflet outlining consent.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

