

This information is for patients who are having an x-ray examination of the small bowel to identify a hernia.

A herniogram is an x-ray examination of the abdomen to identify a possible hernia (a bulge of the small bowel through the abdominal wall). A dye (contrast) is injected into the abdomen under local anaesthetic, in order to highlight the outside of the bowel so that all parts of it can be seen on the x-ray pictures.

The reason for having this examination is that some hernias are hard to find, and this is a more accurate method of identifying them than by hand examination. Your surgeon can then discuss the possible treatments with you when the results become available.

There are no alternatives as this procedure is the most accurate for identifying these types of hernias.

Preparation

You must phone the Imaging department at least a week in advance on 020 7288 5680 if:

- you are taking **warfarin** or any **other blood thinning medication**;
- you have **diabetes** and are taking **metformin** or **insulin**;
- you have **asthma**; or
- you might be **pregnant**.

You must not have anything to eat or drink for 4 hours before the examination

On arrival at the hospital

- You should go to the main reception and ask for the Day Surgery Unit.
- Once there, a nurse will check your medical and personal details and your blood pressure and pulse.
- You will be given an armband and a gown to change into.
- You will then be taken to the x-ray department for the examination.

The examination

- The Radiologist (specialist doctor) will go through the examination with you and ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand the procedure and agree to go ahead with it.
- Please do not hesitate to ask any questions that you may have.
- You will be asked to lie on an x-ray table on your back.
- The radiologist will use ultrasound to identify the exact injection site just below the umbilicus (belly button).
- He/she will then give you an injection of local anaesthetic to numb the area before inserting a fine needle. This should not be painful but you will experience a pushing sensation.
- The dye (contrast) is then injected through the needle.
- The needle is then removed and a small plaster placed over the site.
- You will then be asked to turn over onto your front when a number of x-rays will be taken.
- This takes about 15 minutes.
- You will be taken back to the Day Surgery ward.

After the examination

- You will need to rest in bed for about 4 hours.
- Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked regularly.
- You can have a drink and a snack as soon as you feel like it.
- It is unlikely that you will experience any pain when the local anaesthetic wears off but if you do have any discomfort please do not hesitate to ask a nurse for some painkillers.
- You can go home as soon as your nurse has checked that it is safe for you to do so.

Going home

- You should arrange for someone to come and take you home, you should not drive yourself.
- You should take things easy for 24 hours following the procedure.
- You can return to work and normal activities after 24 hours.
- You may experience some mild pain for 2-3 days after the procedure, in which case you can take your usual painkillers.
- You can remove the plaster covering the needle site the next day.

- **Results of the test will be given to you by your surgeon or by the radiologist at your next appointment.**

Risks

This is a very safe procedure but there is some risk associated with most procedures. For a herniogram the risks include:

Puncture of the bowel, this is a very small risk and rarely requires further surgery to repair it.

Reaction to the dye – this is very rare and can be treated at the time.

Radiation – there is a level of radiation as with any other radiological examination, but it is not excessive.

If you have any concerns about these risks please speak to the radiologist before your examination.

For further information

Please phone the specialist radiology nurse on 020 7288 5685, 9am – 5pm Monday – Friday.

If the phone is on answerphone, please leave a number and the nurse will phone you back.



www.whittington.nhs.uk

© Whittington IMG/Her/2 07/09 Review 2011

Department of Imaging

Herniogram