

Contrast imaging of veins

You are coming in for contrast X-Ray imaging of the veins. The procedure requires both preparation and aftercare and therefore a place is reserved for you in the ward as well.

What is venous contrast imaging and what can be examined by it?

Blood flow in the veins is examined with contrast X-Ray imaging. The test looks for narrowing, blockages, or vascular malformations in the veins. The veins of the body, lungs or limbs can be imaged. Examinations are performed by injecting a contrast agent into a vein and taking images using X-Rays.

How to prepare for the procedure?

- You will arrive at the hospital either the day before the examination or on the morning of the examination day.
- Metformin medication for diabetes does not need to be stopped before the procedure. However, the medicine may be stopped after the test if kidney function so requires. You may take other medicines as before with a small drop of water.
- You must fast from the morning of the day of the procedure.
- The use of tobacco and other nicotine products is prohibited 24 hours before the procedure, because it causes the blood vessels to constrict and may lead to failure of the procedure.
- If you are coming for a contrast imaging of the pulmonary arteries, anti-blood clotting medication (Marevan or equivalent) is stopped 3-4 days before the procedure, with the consent of the treating physician, to prevent bleeding during the procedure.
- The examination is usually done through intravenous injection, therefore the skin around the puncture area should not have redness or a rash, due to the risk of inflammation.
- The examination is performed with the help of X-rays, therefore it must be confirmed that you are not pregnant before the examination. If you have an allergy to contrast agents or a kidney impairment you should report this in advance.
- Jewellery and watches should be removed before coming for this procedure.

How is the procedure done?

The procedure is performed by a Radiologist and two Radiographers.

The procedure is performed under general anaesthesia.

During imaging, you are lying still on the x-ray table.

A thin plastic tube, or catheter, is inserted through the vein into the area to be imaged, through which a contrast agent is injected. X-rays are taken at the same time.

There is no pain sensitivity in the blood vessels, so moving the catheter in the blood vessel does not hurt. Injecting the contrast agent produces a warm sensation.

Based on the findings, the procedure may be continued with the necessary treatment, such as balloon angioplasty or installation of a stent.

What about after the procedure?

- The procedure takes altogether about 1 hour, after which the cannula or catheter is removed and the injection site is closed by applying pressure.
- Depending on the treatment, bed rest after the procedure is 2-4 hours.
- After the procedure, you can eat and drink normally, unless there are other restrictions.
- Drinking plenty of fluids is recommended to clear the contrast agent faster from the body.
- Usually you may go home on the day of the procedure. When you go home, you will receive more detailed aftercare instructions from the ward.

Where do you get the results from the procedure?

The referring outpatient clinic or ward is responsible for communicating the results of the examination to you.