

Lymphangiography, or X-ray examination of the lymphatic system

You have been referred for lymphangiography- an x-ray examination of the lymphatic system. The procedure requires both preparation and aftercare and therefore a place is reserved for you in the ward as well.

What is lymphangiography and what is the purpose of this procedure?

The purpose of the procedure is to image the lymphatic system of the abdomen and chest area and to find any defects. If a lymph fluid leak is found during the procedure, efforts will be made to block it at the same time, if possible.

How to prepare for the procedure?

- You will arrive at the hospital on the morning of the procedure or the day before the procedure.
- Blood tests are taken for the procedure.
- Medication that affects blood clotting will be discontinued according to separate instructions that you will receive from the referring outpatient clinic or department to prevent the risk of bleeding. Patients with an artificial heart valve, or other absolute indications, should not stop taking blood thinning medication.
- You must fast from the morning of the day of the procedure.

How is the procedure done?

The procedure is performed with the help of X-rays. The procedure is performed by a Radiologist and two Radiographers. During imaging, you are lying still on your back on the X-ray table.

The procedure is performed under general anaesthesia. A thin needle is inserted through the lymph node in the groin, through which a contrast agent is injected, which then travels from the lymph node to the lymphatic system. X-rays are taken at the same time. Injecting the contrast agent produces some minor sensations. The injection phase usually lasts from half an hour to an hour.

If the scan reveals a lymph fluid leak, it can be blocked, or embolized, by gluing and using thin metal coils. The procedure is performed through a thin plastic tube, or catheter, inserted into the lymphatic system.

What about after the procedure?

- The procedure takes between 1-3 hours altogether.
- Depending on the treatment, the length of bed rest varies, being four hours at most.
- After the procedure, you can eat and drink normally, unless there are other restrictions.
- You can usually go home the same day. 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.