

# Having a T-tube cholangiogram

## Information for Patients

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## Introduction

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This leaflet tells you about having a T-tube cholangiogram. It explains how the test is done, what to expect, and what the possible risks are.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

## What is a T-tube cholangiogram?

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A T-Tube Cholangiogram is an X-ray examination done on patients who have had an operation to remove the gallbladder. The surgeon sometimes leaves a tube in the bile duct if there is a chance there could be a gallstone remaining in one of the ducts. The tube is brought out onto the surface of the abdomen at the time of surgery and is attached to a collecting bag. Contrast (X-ray dye) is introduced through the T tube to identify or exclude gallstones within the bile ducts on X-rays.

## What do I need to do to before my test?

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There is no specific dietary preparation for this test. You should continue to take all your normal medications.

### **Females**

If you are pregnant, or think you may be pregnant, you must tell the imaging staff so that appropriate protection or advice can be given.

### **Allergy to iodine or contrast medium**

You should inform us in advance if you have a known allergy to iodine or intravenous contrast material (dye). Your doctor may prescribe medications prior to the examination to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction.

## What happens during the procedure?

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You will be taken into the screening/fluoroscopy room and asked to lie down on the fluoroscopy table. The fluoroscopy equipment uses x-rays to obtain real-time moving images of the body. A small beam of continuous x-rays passes through the body to an image intensifier, which is suspended over the X-ray table. The sequence of images produced can be viewed on a computer monitor.



X-ray pictures are taken of the abdominal area. The tube draining the bile duct is cleaned and a small needle is inserted into it. A small amount of contrast (X-ray dye) is injected into the bile ducts through the tube while x-ray pictures are taken.

The table may be tilted or you may be asked to lie in different positions whilst the images are taken.

The procedure will be performed by a Radiologist, who is a doctor specially trained to carry out complex imaging examinations and to interpret the images. The Radiologist is helped by a Radiographer, who is a professional trained to carry out X-rays and other imaging examinations. The examination takes about 30 minutes to complete.

## What happens after the test?

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At the end of the test the needle is removed from the tube and you will return to the ward.

## Are there any risks?

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Fluoroscopy involves the use of X-rays. There are strict guidelines in place for the use of x-rays in diagnosing medical conditions so fluoroscopic examinations can only be performed at the request of a Doctor. We will keep the radiation dose as low as we possibly can. Women who are or might be pregnant must inform a member of staff in advance.

You may experience slight discomfort whilst compression is applied to the abdomen. Please inform the Radiologist if this causes you any concern or pain.

Barium is not absorbed into the blood and allergic reactions are extremely rare.

Despite these slight risks, your doctor believes it is advisable that you should have this examination, and do bear in mind there are greater risks from missing a serious disorder by not having your scan.

## How do I get my results?

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The Radiologist will review the images from your Small Bowel Meal and send a report to your doctor. Your GP or hospital Consultant who referred you for the test will see you to discuss the results.

In some cases the Radiologist may discuss the findings with you at the end of the procedure.

## Any questions?

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We will do our best to make your visit as comfortable and stress free as possible. If you have any questions or suggestions for us, please contact the Interventional Radiology department on 01225 824366.

## More information

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For general information about Radiology departments, visit The Royal College of Radiologists' website: <https://www.rcr.ac.uk/public-and-media/what-expect-when>

For information about the effects of x-rays read the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) publication: 'X-rays how safe are they?' on the website: [http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb\\_C/1194947388410](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947388410)

## How do I make a comment about my examination?

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If you have any concerns or suggestions following your examination, please contact the [Patient Advice and Liaison Service \(PALS\)](#),  
Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust, Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG.  
Email: [ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net)  
Tel: 01225 821655 or 01225 826319