

What is an Arthrogram?

An arthrogram is a procedure used to examine cartilage and joint surfaces by injecting a small amount of X-RAY dye into the joint. This procedure is particularly effective for detecting tears or lesions of the structures and ligaments of the joints, especially the shoulder and hip. The procedure is performed in conjunction with MRI, CT, or X-ray.

Preparing for an Arthrogram

No special preparation is needed before an arthrogram. You can eat and drink as usual. You should inform your physician of any medications you are taking and if you have any allergies, especially to X-ray dye. Also inform your doctor about recent illnesses or other medical conditions.

You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothing and to wear a gown during the exam. You may also be asked to remove jewelry, eyeglasses, or any metal objects or clothing that may interfere with the x-ray process.

Women should always inform their physicians or technologists if there is any chance of pregnancy. Many imaging tests are not performed during pregnancy so as not to expose the fetus to radiation.

What to Expect During the Exam

Your skin will be cleaned with antiseptic soap. Using a needle, the radiologist will anesthetize the area. After the area is numb, a needle will be placed into the joint space. Dr. Blatt or Dr. Heideman will confirm correct needle placement while watching a computer monitor. This will show the exact position of the needle using X-rays. When the needle is in the correct place, the dye (contrast) will be injected and a number of X-ray images will be taken. This part of the study will take about 30 minutes, after which you will be sent to the MRI scanner for the rest of your study.

What MMI Needs to Know

- ➔ Are you allergic to contrast material?
- ➔ Do you have diabetes?
- ➔ Do you take Coumadin or other blood thinners?
- ➔ Are you being treated now for any kind of infection?

- ➔ Do you have a history of claustrophobia?
- ➔ Do you have any metal in your body, such as a pacemaker, aneurysm clip, artificial heart valve, hearing aid, medication pump, dentures, orthopedic pin/rod/wire/plate or shrapnel or gunshot fragment?
- ➔ For women: are you using an IUD or diaphragm? Are you breastfeeding an infant, pregnant, or suspect that you are pregnant?

What to Expect After the Exam

You may leave the department after your exam. Normal activities are fine, but avoid athletic strenuous activities for 24 hours. You may experience some discomfort or swelling which you may treat with over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines like Advil. Ice packs may be helpful for the first 24 hours.

What are the Possible Side Effects?

The most common side effect is short-lived joint pain that is probably due to the increased pressure in the joint. It often starts a few hours after the examination and may last for 1-3 days at the most. Advil and other medications routinely used for joint pain are also effective against this side effect. Bleeding into the joint is a rare complication.

Other side effects are very rare. When the dye (contrast) is injected intravenously, it may cause an allergic reaction. However, in this procedure the dye is injected into the joint. In this scenario, such reactions are extremely rare. Infections are also exceedingly rare (less than 1:10,000)

About your Results

Dr. Blatt or Dr. Heideman will read the study, typically within 24 hours. Within 48 hours, a report will be sent to the ordering physician, as well as any other physician you may have requested.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us at (973) 912-0404

**MMI - - Where *your* health
is *our* priority**