

Sialogram - A Patients Guide

What is a Sialogram?

A Sialogram is an X-ray test to show the salivary glands and ducts. These salivary glands help to keep your mouth moist and help swallowing.

There are four large salivary glands – the parotids, (which are found at the side of the face below the ear), and the submandibular (lying in the hollow beneath the jawbone). To get X-ray pictures of them an iodine based X-ray dye is used to show up the tubes within the gland.

A small amount of colourless liquid visible to X-rays is injected into the salivary ducts using a very fine, smooth ended cannula. X-rays are then taken to show the glands.

Your doctor will have explained why the test is necessary and which of the four main glands we need to examine.

How do I prepare for my examination?

No preparation is required for this examination

What happens when I arrive?

On arrival in the X-ray department you may be asked to remove any earrings or neck chains. When the time comes for your test, you will be taken into the X-ray room.

What does it involve?

Once in the X-ray room you will be asked to sit on the X-ray table and given a full explanation of the procedure. You will then be given a lemon flavoured liquid to wash around your mouth and be asked to lie down. The Radiologist will examine the inside of your mouth with the aid of a bright light. They will then pass a fine tube into the small opening on the inside of your mouth which leads to the salivary gland. The X-Ray equipment will then be positioned over your head. Dye containing iodine is injected into the duct and the X-Ray equipment will move around you taking images as it goes. The tube will then be removed.

How long will it take?

This examination usually takes 30 minutes to complete.

After the examination?

You may have a slightly oily taste in your mouth, this is quite harmless. The Radiologist may be able to tell you what the examination has shown. More often the Radiologist will want to carefully analyse the images later and provide a detailed report to the referring consultant or GP.

You may eat and drink normally as soon as the test is finished.

Are there any side/after effects?

During the test, people frequently notice a slight ache in the face. This usually passes quickly.

Sometimes people notice swelling or aching in the face after the test. If this becomes painful or lasts longer than a day, contact your GP.

Further Information

If you have any concerns or questions about your Sialogram please telephone the X-ray department on 01702 385280.