



# Fistulogram or sinogram

**This information sheet explains about the fistulogram or sinogram scan, what is involved and what to expect when your child comes to Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) for the scan.**

## **What is a fistulogram or sinogram?**

Both are imaging scans used to look at a passage in the body. A fistula is an abnormal connecting tube connecting two organs, such as the bowel or bladder, or between an organ and the skin. A sinus is an abnormal track or cavity that opens to the skin.

A fistulogram shows a fistula and a sinogram shows a sinus tract. The scans allow doctors to see the connecting tube or track more clearly. It uses contrast liquid, which shows up well on x-rays.

## **Are there any alternatives?**

Various types of scan such as CT, ultrasound and x-ray may show the fistula or sinus tract but not in as much detail as a fistulogram or sinogram. The results of the scan are used to plan your child's treatment.

## **When you receive your appointment letter**

If you are unable to keep this appointment, please inform the department at least two weeks beforehand. Sometimes we can offer the appointment to another child on the waiting list. As so many children and young people need to use our services, we have had to introduce a policy where if a child cancels or does not attend two appointments in a row, we will close their referral and inform their GOSH consultant.

## **The day of the scan**

Please arrive at the Radiology department at the time stated in your child's appointment letter.

Many of the studies we perform involve the use of x-rays. Legally, we are obliged to ask any girls over the age of 12 whether there is any chance they might be pregnant. This is to protect babies in the womb from receiving unnecessary radiation. We will also ask mothers or other female carers if they could be pregnant, especially if they are planning to come into the scanning room with their child. If you are pregnant, we suggest you bring another member of the family with you, to be with your child during the scan instead.

Your child will need to wear a hospital gown for the scan as any metal on their everyday clothing, such as zips or buttons, will show up on the scan, giving a misleading result.

## **The scan**

You will be able to stay with your child throughout the scan. The doctor will ask your child to lie on a bed and will then pass a small flexible tube into the fistula or sinus tract before injecting some contrast liquid. As soon as the contrast liquid is in place, the doctor will take a series of pictures. Usually the whole procedure takes 20 to 30 minutes. After the scan, the contrast liquid will drain naturally from the fistula or out of the sinus tract.



## **After the scan**

When enough pictures have been taken, your child will be able to get off the bed, get dressed and go home if no further tests or treatment is needed. The radiology doctor will send a report about the scan to your child's doctor.

## **Are there any risks?**

The contrast liquid will not interfere with any medicines your child is taking. While x-rays use radiation, we make every attempt to keep the dose as low as possible while still getting the best possible pictures to plan treatment.

**If you have any questions,  
please telephone the Radiology  
department on 020 7829 8625**

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Compiled by the Radiology department in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group  
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