

Retrograde Urethrogram

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout explains how a retrograde urethrogram works, how to prepare, what to expect, and how to get your results.

What is a retrograde urethrogram?

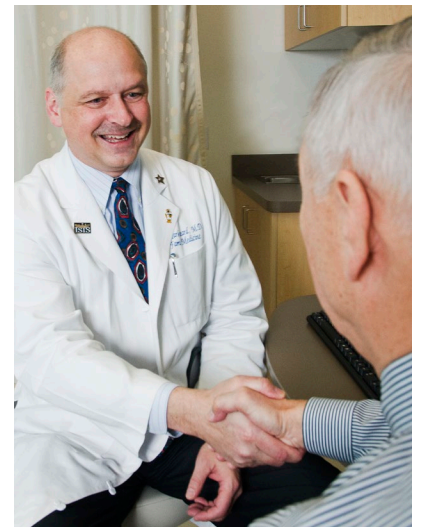
A *retrograde urethrogram* is an X-ray exam of the *urethra*, the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body. The exam is used to diagnose problems in the urethra.

How does the exam work?

- A *catheter* (a small, sterile tube) is put into your urethra, and it is filled with *contrast* (X-ray dye). Contrast helps details show more clearly in the X-ray images.
- Small amounts of X-rays are passed through your body. Pictures of the inside of your body will show on a monitor.
- You do not need to have *sedation* (relaxing medicine) for this exam.

How do I prepare?

- Tell your provider about:
 - Recent illnesses or other health issues
 - Allergies you have to medicines, especially if you have ever had a reaction to contrast
- *If you were assigned female at birth:* Tell your provider if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if there is any chance you are pregnant.
- Do **not** wear jewelry, piercings, or clothes with snaps, zippers, or other metal.



Talk with your referring provider about the results of your exam.

What can I expect?

- We may ask you to change into a gown and remove your undergarments.
- We will ask you to empty your bladder right before the exam.
- *If you were assigned female at birth:* Tell the technologist if there is any chance you could be pregnant.

How is the exam done?

- You will lie on an exam table. The technologist may help you get in the right position.
- We will then:
 - Take a few X-rays before we give you the contrast.
 - Clean your genital area with special antiseptic soap.
 - Place a catheter into your urethra.
 - Inject the contrast.
- The radiologist will take more X-rays with a *fluoroscope* (a type of X-ray machine).
- We will remove the catheter at the end of the exam.

What will I feel during the exam?

- When your genital area is washed, the soap may feel cool.
- You may feel some discomfort when the catheter is placed and your urethra is filled with contrast. Tell your radiologist if you are very uncomfortable.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- UW Medical Center -
Montlake Imaging Services:
206.598.6200
- Harborview Medical Center
Imaging Services:
206.744.3105

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist with special training in reading these images will review your X-rays and send a report to your primary care or referring provider. The radiologist will not talk with you about your exam and X-ray images. Your own provider will give you your results.

You and your provider will decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

You may also read your results on your MyChart page. If you need copies of your images on disc, call Radiology Records at 206.598.6206.