

Arthrogram



An arthrogram is an imaging study used to assess your joint problem. Contrast fluid is injected into the joint being studied. Then X-ray, CT scan, or MRI is used to create images.

What to tell your healthcare provider

Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if:

- You are pregnant or think you may be
- You have any allergies
- You have any bleeding problems or take blood thinners or other medicines, including aspirin

How do I get ready for an arthrogram?

- Wear loose-fitting clothing.

What happens during the arthrogram?

- X-rays of your joint are taken first.
- The skin around the joint is cleaned and then covered with drapes.
- The area around your joint will be numbed with a local anesthetic.
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- The radiologist inserts a needle into the joint using fluoroscopic or ultrasound guidance. A sample of joint fluid may be removed.
- Contrast fluid and possibly air is injected into your joint to improve the images.
- X-rays are again taken to confirm contrast is located in the joint space.
- You may be asked to move your joint to spread out the dye. The healthcare provider may move your joint to look at the joint in motion.
- If you need a CT scan or MRI, it will follow the X-rays. Depending on the type of test, certain safety steps are needed when having a CT scan or MRI. Your healthcare provider will give you those instructions.

What happens after an arthrogram?

- Vigorous exercise is not advised for 24 hours after the arthrogram.
- You may have swelling and mild pain in the affected joint after the procedure. Your healthcare provider may provide instructions to apply ice if swelling happens. If swelling continues or increases after a day or two, contact the healthcare provider.
- Take a pain reliever for soreness as advised by your healthcare provider. Aspirin or certain other pain medicines may increase the chance of bleeding. Take only advised medicines.

- Make a follow-up appointment to get your results.

What are the risks of arthrogram?

- This procedure uses medical X-ray radiation. The amount of X-ray exposure is felt to be low and safe.
- There is a small risk of pain, bleeding, or infection at the injection site.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have:

- Pain or swelling that doesn't get better by 2 days after your test
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Chills
- Anything else your healthcare provider told you to report based on your health condition

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