

Having a Dacrocystogram

Information for patients



What is a dacrocystogram?

A dacrocystogram is an x-ray of the tear ducts.

You will be asked to lie on your back on the x-ray table and firstly have x-rays taken of your eye area. Eye drops (containing local anaesthetic) will then be administered.

A thin plastic tube is inserted into the small hole, in the corner of your eye, through which tears drain. When the tube is in place a small amount of contrast (x-ray dye) is inserted whilst x-rays are taken. You may experience a bitter taste at this point. Further images are taken and the tube is removed.

You may be asked take a seat whilst the equipment is manoeuvred for the final images, which will be taken with you standing.

The examination is not normally painful although you may experience slight discomfort in the eye.

Who performs the test?

The test is performed by a team of healthcare professionals which may include a radiologist, a radiographer, an advanced radiographer practitioner/specialist radiographer, and an assistant.

How do I prepare for the test?

You do not need to prepare in advance for this test. You may continue to eat and drink as normal. Do not stop taking vital medicines (for example, heart drugs, steroids, diuretics/water tablets).

When you attend please do not wear contact lenses or eye make-up.

What should I bring with me?

Please do not bring large sums of money or items of value with you. It is helpful if you remove necklaces and earrings before attending. Unfortunately we are unable to provide any childcare so please make alternative arrangements if necessary.

How long will I be in the department?

You may be in the department for up to one hour. Although we strive to keep to your appointment time, occasionally there may be a delay due to emergency patients.

Are there any side-effects?

Radiation

This procedure involves x-rays. Female patients who are, or might be pregnant **must** inform a member of staff in advance.

The amount of radiation used is more than an ordinary x-ray of the chest or body and is equal to the natural radiation we receive from the atmosphere over a period of approximately two years. The risk from this radiation dose is very low.

Allergic reaction

Some patients may be allergic to the x-ray dye or medicines we give you. This is very rare. If you have any allergies please tell the member of staff who is performing your examination, at the start of the examination.

Do you ever fail to complete the examination?

This is a safe examination that is usually successful. If, for any reason, we are unable to perform the examination we will inform your doctor who will discuss the alternatives with you. Despite these small risks your doctor believes it is beneficial for you to have this examination. Do bear in mind that there are greater risks from missing a serious disorder by not having the examination.

How will I feel following the test?

You should not experience any adverse effects. Your eye may be red and irritated but do **NOT** rub your eye as it will continue to be anaesthetised for a little while afterwards.

The local anaesthetic drops can cause very short term blurring of your vision. It should pass quickly during the procedure. Please do not drive until your vision is clear.

How will I get my results?

At the end of the test the radiologist will discuss the results with you. The results will be sent to your GP (if they referred you for the test. If so you must make an appointment to see them). If you have been referred by a hospital consultant / specialist then you will be sent an appointment to attend the relevant clinic or contacted by letter with results.



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