

# WHAT IS: HYDRODILATATION AND ARTHROGRAPHY



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## What is Hydrodilatation/Arthrography?

**An Arthrogram is a procedure usually performed under imaging guidance (using equipment such as a X-ray, CT or ultrasound) that involves introducing a needle into any joint of the body. It usually involves the injection of contrast (X-ray dye) to confirm the correct depth and position of the needle. If used solely as a pain relieving procedure, local anesthetic and cortisone may be injected, or other healing medications, such as glucose (prolotherapy), Autologous Blood Injection (ABI) or Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP).**

An Arthrogram may also be of diagnostic use. Pain that disappears following an injection of local anesthetic into a joint usually confirms that the joint injected is the source of the patient's pain. As groin pain has many causes, this technique is commonly used in deciding whether the hip joint is the cause of a patient's groin pain. Although this may identify the source of the patient's pain, it does not determine the exact cause. For this, further imaging is usually required, such as a CT scan. If this scan is to be performed on the same day as the Arthrogram by the fluid and dye injected into the joint may not only relieve the patient's pain, but also distend the joint and make subtle problems more evident, such as a cartilage tear.

In specific circumstances, excessive inflammation in a joint may result in the lining and capsule of that joint contracting, causing pain and restriction of motion. This occurs in the shoulder and is commonly referred to as a 'frozen shoulder,' however is also known as adhesive capsulitis, or capsular constriction. This may be treated by the procedure of Hydrodilatation, whereby an Arthrogram of the shoulder is performed followed by stretching of the

capsule, injecting high volumes of saline. The effect of this is therefore twofold; pain and inflammation is reduced by the cortisone and local anesthetic, and range of motion is improved by stretching the capsule.

## What should I expect when I have my procedure?

After changing into a gown, you will be asked to lie on an examination bed or chair with the area of clinical interest exposed. The risks and possible complications will be discussed with you prior to the procedure and with your acceptance we will proceed. The joint to be injected is then located using the relevant radiological equipment (such as an x-ray machine, ultrasound or CT scanner). A mark is then placed on your skin that correlates with the path that the needle must take to pass into the joint in a safe and precise manner. The skin is thoroughly cleaned with a hospital grade antiseptic wash and a local anesthetic is administered. You may experience brief discomfort which will pass once the local anesthetic has taken effect, this generally takes only a few seconds. A needle is then placed into the joint, at this time contrast (dye) is injected to confirm the position. Occasionally, depending on varying patient body sizes, the degree of difficulty of the procedure or the condition affecting the joint, the needle may require re-manipulation. Once correct positioning of the needle has occurred and depending on the test that has been requested, one of the three following options will be performed:

1. For simple pain relieving injections into a joint, a small dose of corticosteroid and local anesthetic will be administered.
2. For a diagnostic Arthrogram before a CT scan, a contrast (dye) will be injected prior to your final and

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is available:**

07 3115 9155 CHAPEL HILL  
07 5462 3211 GATTON  
07 3372 1939 INALA  
07 3281 9051 IPSWICH (NORTH)  
07 3894 9755 IPSWICH (SOUTH)

07 3375 9522 OXLEY  
07 3436 0600 SPRINGFIELD LAKES  
07 3330 6455 SUNNYBANK  
07 3219 8877 UNDERWOOD

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definitive scan, with or without corticosteroid and local anesthetic as outlined in (1).

3. For a Hydrodilatation, local anesthetic and corticosteroid are mixed with the saline and injected into the joint. In the shoulder, where this procedure is most commonly performed, 10 to 20ml of fluid is injected.

The Arthrogram is now over. The injection site is then covered with a small dressing, which may be removed in 24 hours. Our Radiologist will now discuss post-procedural care with you.

## What does Exact Radiology recommended for my post-procedural care?

Refrain from any significant activity involving the body part for one week. Necessary activities of daily living are permissible, but do not engage in any deliberate exercise such as running, weight training or other sporting pursuits.

Some discomfort may occur following the procedure, Paracetamol and a cool compress may help. If the pain is severe, anti-inflammatory medications are particularly helpful. This pain flare is usually most prominent in the first three days following the procedure and slowly decreases. If you are concerned, please phone the Exact Radiology Clinic where the injection was performed.

Exact Radiology Clinics recommend that you discuss your post procedure rehabilitation options with your Health Care Professional eg. physiotherapy treatment program.

## Are there any risks or side effects from my procedure?

As with any medical procedure there are always risks. The most serious risk is an infection, as an infection may further damage the joint and require surgery. As a minimum, an infected joint will require at least several weeks of antibiotics, often delivered via an intravenous line. Though serious, the chances of an infection are small, approximately 1 in 30,000. Side effects are usually associated with the medication used. For example, if

cortisone is used and you are diabetic, you may have raised sugar levels for several days. Cortisone may also result in facial flushing, palpitations and restlessness. If cortisone is to be injected, we will provide you with a fact sheet about cortisone at the time of your visit. Rarely, people may be allergic to the x-ray contrast. If this is known, we may use air to confirm appropriate needle position in the joint that is injected.

## How should I prepare for my procedure?

When you phone to arrange your appointment one of our friendly reception staff will advise you of the preparation and requirements for this procedure. We will also need to know if you are currently on blood thinners such as Warfarin or Aspirin.

**Blood thinning medications that you are currently taking should be ceased prior to this procedure. This should be discussed with your Health Care Professional prior to making your appointment.**

- Aspirin and Warfarin for 5 days,
- Plavix for 7 days and
- Iscover for 8 days.

If you have had a heart valve replacement, it may be necessary to take antibiotics before the procedure. Please discuss this with your Cardiologist/Cardiac Surgeon and take antibiotics as directed.

## Things to bring along to my appointment:

- Previous films for area of clinical interest.
- Medicare or Department of Veteran Affairs card
- Referral (this is a legal requirement)
- Workcover details and claim number (if this is a Workcover claim)

## Fees

Exact Radiology Clinics bulk bill most Medicare eligible services, however some examinations may incur a fee.

When you make your appointment, the booking staff will advise if a fee is applicable and payment will be requested on the day of your examination.