

Fistulagram

What is a Fistulagram?

A fistula is a passage between your blood vessels that allows kidney dialysis. A fistulagram is an X-ray procedure to look at the blood flow and check for blood clots or other blockages in the blood flow.

Why is it done?

Blood clots or blockages may interfere with the flow of blood to and from your dialysis machine. The fistulagram helps the doctor find any blockages.

How is it done?

The radiologist places tiny tubes, called catheters, in your fistula, much like what occurs during dialysis. The doctor then injects special dye so it can be seen on X-rays.

What if the doctor finds a blockage?

When fistulas and grafts become clogged or narrowed, which can interfere with dialysis, interventional radiologists use image-guided interventions to fix the problem:

- Injection of a clot dissolving medicine.
- Use of a device which removes the blood clots.
- Use of balloons to open narrowed areas in your fistula and help them remain open. After the balloon is removed, a small wire mesh tube called a stent may be placed inside the fistula to help keep it open.

Do I have special instructions after the exam?

- Any special instructions will be reviewed with you when you are seen for your procedure.

Disclaimer: This material provides general information only. It should not be used in place of the advice, instructions, or treatment given by your doctor or other health care professional.
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