



Hysterosalpingogram (HSG)

What is a hysterosalpingogram (HSG)?

Hysterosalpingogram (HSG) is an X-ray test to examine the uterine cavity and also check whether the fallopian tubes are open or blocked. It is a quick outpatient procedure that is scheduled to be performed after your menstrual period, before you start ovulating.

How is a HSG performed?

HSG is performed on an outpatient basis while you lie on an X-ray table. The doctor will place a speculum into the vagina. The cervix is cleaned and a cannula is positioned at the opening of the cervix. An iodine solution is then injected into the uterus through the cannula, which can be detected by X-ray as it travels up the cannula, into the uterus and through the fallopian tubes. Spillage of the dye out of the tubes indicates that they are patent and not blocked. Any defects or abnormalities in the uterus can be seen as an obstruction in the fluid movement. Once your doctor obtains the required X-ray images, the cannula is removed and you can return to normal activities.

Is HSG uncomfortable?

After HSG, you may experience mild to moderate cramps in your uterus. This may last for 5-10 minutes or several hours. To reduce discomfort and cramping, your doctor may prescribe certain medications to be taken before the procedure or when you experience the symptoms. You will require someone to drive you home following the procedure.

How does HSG affect fertility?

HSG is performed mostly as a diagnostic procedure. Whether it increases fertility or not is controversial. However, some studies show an increase in fertility lasting for about 3 months.

What are the risks and complications of HSG?

As with any procedure, HSG may be associated with certain risks and complications such as pelvic infection, fainting, exposure to radiation (although it's very low), spotting and allergic reaction to the iodine. Please inform your doctor if you experience swelling, itching or a rash, as it is a sign of iodine allergy.

What do you do if your tubes are blocked?

Your doctor may recommend a laparoscopy to closely view the tubes or perform *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) to bypass the blockage.

Are there other methods to examine your tubes for patency?

Hysterosalpingogram is the most preferred method of checking for patency; however, there are other procedures that can be opted for instead. Chromopertubation and sonohysterosalpingogram (SHG) are other options to evaluate tubal patency.