

Procedure Information: Arthrogram

What is an Arthrogram?

An Arthrogram is a radiographic exam to evaluate your joints. It requires an injection of an iodinated contrast directly into your joint. With contrast in the joint the structures within the joint become visible during fluoroscopy allowing the radiologist to evaluate the anatomy and function of the joint. There are multiple types of Arthrograms depending upon which joint is in question:

- Ankle
- Elbow
- Hip
- Knee
- Shoulder
- Wrist

When is a Arthrogram ordered?

To detect tears or lesions of the structures and ligaments of the joints. A rotator cuff tear of the shoulder is most common.

Patient Preparation

There is no special preparation for this exam.

Report 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time.

What happens during a Arthrogram procedure?

You will be taken to a private changing room to change for the procedure. A radiographer will then take you into an exam room and verify your identity (name and birth date) and obtain medical history for the radiologist. You will be positioned on the examination table with the joint of interest closest to the radiologist.

The radiologist will cleanse the skin around the joint with an antiseptic and cover the area with a sterile drape. Using a small needle, local anesthetic is injected by the radiologist at the area of joint space. This may give a slight

burning sensation. A longer needle is then inserted into the joint using fluoroscopic guidance. Once the needle is in position, contrast and air (depending on the joint exam) are injected into the joint space while the radiologist watches under fluoroscopy. The needle is removed and radiographic images are taken while evaluating the joint motion under fluoroscopy. If an MRI or CT scan is ordered with your Arthrogram study, you will then be moved to that department for further imaging of the joint.

Length of procedure

Arthrogram procedures usually are completed within 30 minutes. Some exams will take longer if an MRI or CT scanning is scheduled after the injection for imaging the joint.

What will I experience after the procedure?

You may feel fullness in the joint from the contrast and air. You may also experience popping when the joint is moved. It will take a few hours for this fullness to go away.

What are the risks?

Any procedures where the skin is broken always carries a slight risk of infection. Be cautious of any swelling or increase of pain at the area of injection.

Consult your doctor if you have concerns following the exam.