

Following the Procedure

For a few hours after the examination your joint may feel uncomfortable.

If laboratory studies were performed on the joint fluid, the results should come back in the next few days. Please keep your clinic appointment with your doctor to get the results of these tests.

If a large amount of fluid was drained from your joint, it is possible for the fluid to come back again. In this case, the procedure may need repeating.


If the joint becomes red, warm or tender, or if you develop a fever in the first few days after the procedure, please see your GP.

Suggestions or comments:

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have.

If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please speak to a member of staff, fill in a comment card at the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (**PALS**), or contact **PALS** on 020 8846 6727. **PALS** staff are able to listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and help sort out problems on your behalf.

For further information about your procedure please contact one of the x-ray staff nurses on 020 8746 8570.

Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare 
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PATIENT
INFORMATION

X-Ray Department

Joint Aspiration



JOINT ASPIRATION

Introduction...

This leaflet has been written for you by staff working in the X-ray Department at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to know about alternative treatment after you have read this, please contact your doctor who referred you for your joint aspiration. You will find their contact details on your clinic appointment letter.

If you need to change your appointment time or date, please contact the X-ray Department on 020 8746 8570 as soon as possible.

What is a joint aspiration?

A joint aspiration is a method of removing a small amount of fluid from a joint using a needle. The fluid taken out of the joint can be sent for testing to help with the diagnosis of your condition. For example, to find the cause of joint swelling such as arthritis, infection, gout, or rheumatoid disease. Joint aspiration can also be helpful in relieving joint swelling and pain.

Risks and Benefits...

You will benefit from this procedure because it will help us to investigate your symptoms and possibly treat them. It is a very safe and short procedure and is done on an outpatient basis so will not require a hospital admission.

These are very common procedures that have little risk. It is possible to have a small amount of bruising or minor bleeding into the joint. There is a very small risk of a serious infection being introduced into the joint (septic arthritis). Rarely, the needle tip might cause damage to the cartilage within the joint.

We will discuss all of the risks and benefits with you in detail before your procedure.

What happens on the day of my appointment?

Please come to the X-ray Reception (First Floor, Lift Bank D) at the time of your appointment. If you are late, it may not be possible to carry out your procedure and it will have to be rebooked. If you use inhalers or GTN spray, please bring them with you.

If you are a private patient, please come 20 minutes early and go to Chelsea Cashiers (Fourth Floor, Lift Bank D) first, and bring the receipt with you to X-ray Reception.

Before the procedure

You will be directed to a waiting area and may be asked to change into a hospital gown. There is no special preparation required for these procedures.

During the procedure

Your doctor who sees you in the X-ray Department will decide whether ultrasound or x-ray will be the best way to look at your joint depending on your symptoms.

You will be taken into either the ultrasound room, or the x-ray room where the examination will be explained to you. This is an opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have.

In the room you will be asked to lie on a bed and the joint area will be examined. Your joint will be cleaned with antiseptic fluid and you will be covered with a sterile drape. The doctor will give you an injection of local anaesthetic to numb the skin over your joint which will cause some stinging initially then go numb.

Throughout the procedure a member of our team will be with you, please let them know if you feel any discomfort. The doctor will insert a needle into your joint and take some fluid out for testing.

The procedure usually takes about 30 minutes, but may take longer.

Synovial Joint

