

Arthrogram

Background

- This is a procedure performed under ultrasound or CT guidance, and requires a needle to be positioned into a joint, after which contrast (x-ray dye) is injected
- The fluid distends the joint, and a CT or MRI is then performed (on the same day) and assists in diagnosis of subtle pathology that may be the cause of your pain
- Occasionally steroid and local anaesthetic may also be given at the time of contrast injection, as this helps determine if the joint is the source of pain, and if so, may also be therapeutic

Preparation

- If imaging has been performed elsewhere, please bring any previous relevant CT or MRI with you
- Please advise us at the time of booking if you taking on any blood thinning medication (Warfarin, Plavix), as some need to be stopped 5-7 days prior to the procedure
- Please arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home after the procedure

Potential Risks

- This is a commonly performed procedure, and generally does not result in serious complications
- The injected medication may cause facial blushing/redness, or a rash, which can last for a few days, before resolving
- If steroid is injected, this may cause fluctuation of blood glucose levels in patients with diabetes, and close monitoring of BSL is recommended
- Although rare, serious risks include:
 - Infection: the majority (1-2%) are minor, however, can be serious (<0.1%) requiring intravenous antibiotics and hospital admission
 - Bleeding/Haematoma: rare, but particularly in patients on "blood thinning" medication, or bleeding disorders:

Procedure

- The procedure takes up to 15 minutes, and is usually tolerated well
- You will be positioned on the ultrasound or CT table, usually on your back
- An initial planning ultrasound or CT will be performed, to confirm the best approach into the joint
- Your skin will be marked with a texta, and an antiseptic wash applied
- Short acting local anaesthetic is injected, which may sting for 10-30 seconds before numbing the region
- A very fine needle is advanced deeper, towards the joint
- The needle may need a few adjustments, until the needle tip is positioned with the joint
- A small volume of contrast is injected
- A small volume of long acting local anaesthetic and steroid may also be injected
- Due to the distension, it is common to feel tightness, pressure, and discomfort in the joint injected

Aftercare

- You may feel some minor discomfort at the site of injection
- The local anaesthetic should result in you being pain free for a short period of time
- Please do not drive for the rest of the day
- The joint injected may take a few days to become pain free
- It is common to hear a gurgling sound in your joint, and this is due to air that often enters the joint with the fluid, and resolves within several days