

Having cyst sclerosis

This leaflet explains what cyst sclerosis is, what happens during the procedure and what the possible risks are. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for such a discussion.

You should have time to discuss your situation with your own consultant or their team and the radiologist (X-ray specialist) who will be doing the procedure. You should be happy that you understand what the procedure involves as you will be required to sign a consent form prior to undergoing the drainage.

What is cyst sclerosis?

This is a minimally invasive way of getting rid of benign cysts in various places around the body. The procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic so that you are awake but the skin is numbed.

Why do I need cyst sclerosis?

Tests, such as ultrasound and CT scans, have shown benign fluid-filled cysts in your body and there is a possibility that this is causing your symptoms (usually pain or distension). Often these cysts do not cause symptoms and can be left alone. If they cause symptoms they can be surgically removed but this is often a fairly invasive procedure requiring general anaesthetic. The fluid can be drained off with a needle but the chance of re-accumulation is very high (over 90%). In "cyst sclerosis" the cyst is drained and the fluid replaced with a strong solution of alcohol to kill the cells lining the cyst (to stop them producing fluid).

Who has made this decision?

The consultant in charge of your care, following discussions with other specialists.

Who will be performing the drainage?

A radiologist who has undergone specialist training and who regularly performs this and other similar procedures will carry out the cyst sclerosis.

Where will the drainage take place?

In the CT scan rooms in the X-ray Department of the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

What happens before the drainage?

You will need to have blood samples taken to make sure your blood clots properly. Blood samples can be taken either in the hospital's phlebotomy (blood test) department or at your GP's surgery.

If you are taking blood-thinning medication such as Warfarin, Dabigatran, Rovaroxaban, Tinzaparin or Clopidogrel, this medication should ideally be temporarily discontinued prior to the procedure. This is not always possible or you may be required to take additional short-acting blood thinners for a few days before. If you are at home and taking any of these medications and have not received instructions to stop them please contact the X-ray Department on 0118 322 8368.

You should not eat for 6 hours, but you can drink clear liquids up to 2 hours, before the procedure.

Please take all your normal medication other than those that have been stopped for the procedure.

What happens during the cyst sclerosis?

You will be asked to undress and put on a hospital gown. You will then be taken into the CT scanning room and asked to lie on the couch. Intravenous sedation and painkiller may be administered if thought necessary.

A preliminary ultrasound scan will be carried out. Once the exact needle path has been determined, the radiologist will clean your skin with antiseptic and inject the skin and deeper tissues with local anaesthetic. This will sting briefly before the area goes numb. The radiologist will then insert a needle followed by a guide wire and drainage catheter (a small plastic tube about 3mm in diameter) into the cyst. The fluid will then be drained out. A dye will be injected down the drainage catheter and a CT scan performed (to check that the cyst does not communicate with any other structure in the body). If that CT scan is satisfactory the dye will be replaced with a strong alcohol solution. This is left in the cyst for 10-20 minutes during which time you will be asked to change position several times. The alcohol is drained off and the drainage tube removed.

How long will it take?

The whole procedure takes about 45 minutes.

Will it hurt?

You will feel stinging as the local anaesthetic is injected. Some people also feel some momentary discomfort as the needle or tube enters the cyst. The alcohol may also cause pain.

What happens afterwards?

After the drainage catheter has been removed, you will be monitored in the X-ray recovery area for a short while before being discharged.

What are the risks and complications?

An image guided cyst sclerosis is generally a safe procedure but there are some risks and occasional complications, such as failure to get the drain in or to drain the fluid out. Very occasionally bleeding can occur. Leakage of alcohol into the wrong space is very unlikely but potentially serious.

Further information

If you require any further information please call the X-ray Department at the Royal Berkshire Hospital 0118 322 8368.

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
London Road
Reading RG1 5AN
0118 322 5111 (Switchboard)
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and large print upon request.

Dr Gibson, Consultant Radiologist
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