

Galactogram/Ductogram

What is a galactogram/ductogram?

A galactogram, also called a ductogram, is a special type of mammogram using a contrast media, or dye, to image the breast ducts (a hollow passage in the breast through which milk passes). The duct takes the milk from the milk gland (lobule), where it is produced, to the nipple. The contrast media, or dye, blocks x-rays so when the duct is filled with this dye, it is seen more clearly on the mammogram. This is helpful to the radiologist to better visualize any breast duct abnormalities.

Why is a galactogram performed?

A galactogram is performed to evaluate abnormal nipple discharge. This drainage is typically only from one nipple and is usually spontaneous. Nipple discharge from both nipples is usually benign and does not require further study. Drainage that is yellow, green, blue or black is usually considered less suspicious. Discharges that are clear, colorless or bloody are labeled as more uncertain. Nipple discharge can occur for many reasons, but should be evaluated by a healthcare provider. The radiologist who performs the ductogram will determine if there is an abnormality present as well as its location within the duct.

How do I prepare for a galactogram?

The key to a successful galactogram is to locate the duct with the abnormal discharge. You should not squeeze out any discharge from the nipple for at least 24 hours before the procedure. This ensures that there will be enough fluid in the duct on the day of your procedure. If the drainage suddenly stops the day of your procedure, please call St. Luke's Breast and Bone Health at 319/369-7216 and speak with a mammographer or a nurse.

Wear a two-piece outfit since you will remove your clothing from the waist up and a mammography cape will be worn. You can eat and drink as usual. Take your usual medications the day of your appointment. A nurse will attempt to call you at home to obtain a brief health history, a list of your medications and allergies before the exam. It is important to report any past reactions to x-ray contrast (dye) to the nurse.

How do I schedule a galactogram?

Your healthcare provider's office will call to schedule the procedure. An order from your healthcare provider is required prior to performing the procedure. If your healthcare provider has given you the order, make sure to bring it with you to your appointment.

To schedule a galactogram at St. Luke's Breast & Bone Health, call Centralized Scheduling at 319/369-8129.

Where do I come for a galactogram?

St. Luke's Breast & Bone Health is located at 855 A Avenue NE, Suite 400. This is also known as the Medical Office Plaza or MOP building. Make a point to be at St. Luke's Breast & Bone Health about 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Park in the parking ramp connected by the skywalk to the MOP building or free valet parking is also available at the front of the building.

What can I expect during a galactogram?

The galactogram takes between 30-60 minutes to perform. There must be nipple discharge present at the time of the procedure. First, you will lie down on your back or your side. The radiologist will gently cleanse the nipple of any dried drainage, then press on your nipple watching for which duct is leaking fluid. Once the duct is identified, the nipple will be gently cleansed with alcohol. The radiologist will guide the cannula (a small, blunt-tipped needle) into the duct as he/she stabilizes the nipple between the thumb and forefinger. You may experience some discomfort with this, but it is not usually painful. Once the cannula is in place, the dye is injected. Mammograms are done after the dye is injected. The radiologist studies these mammograms to determine if there is a mass or other abnormality related to the duct that could be causing your nipple discharge. The radiologist will discuss the **preliminary** results with you before you leave.

What happens after a galactogram?

The contrast media may result in some clear, sticky drainage from the nipple. The Breast & Bone Health staff will provide you with gauze pads to wear in your bra. There will not be any restrictions on your activity or driving after the procedure. Unless you have an allergy, you may take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for any discomfort you may experience. You may resume any usual medications/supplements that you take, as well as your usual diet.

When will I find out the results?

The radiologist will interpret the exam and make recommendations. A **final** report will be sent to your healthcare provider. Preliminary results from the radiologist will be given the day of the exam. Depending on the results, you may be referred to a surgeon for additional evaluation.