

# Preparing for Your Galactogram

## For patients at the Rapid Diagnostic Centre

Read this resource to learn:

- how to prepare
- what to expect during a galactogram
- what questions to ask your doctor
- where to get more information

Gattuso Rapid Diagnostic Centre  
Princess Margaret Cancer Centre  
3rd floor, Breast Imaging  
610 University Avenue  
Toronto, ON, M5G 2M9

Phone: 416 946 2297

Fax: 416 946 2370

Website: [www.grdc.theprincessmargaret.ca](http://www.grdc.theprincessmargaret.ca)



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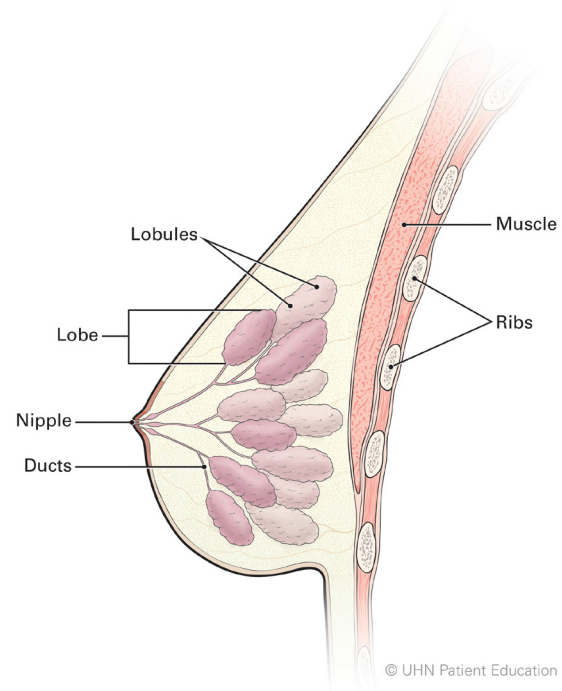
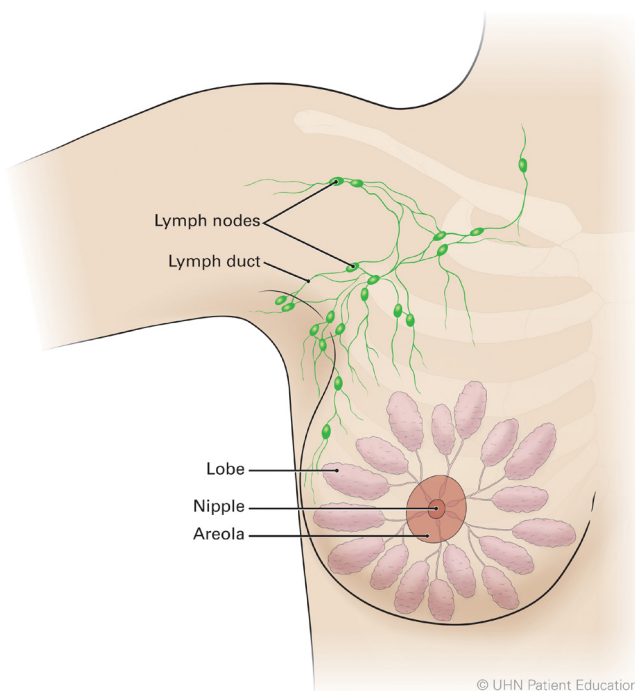
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## About galactograms

### What is a galactogram?

Your breast is made of many glands and ducts. These lead to the nipple and the colored area around the nipple. This area is called the areola. The milk-carrying ducts extend from the nipple into the breast tissue. They are placed like the spokes of a wheel.

A galactogram is a procedure used to find out why you have clear or bloody nipple discharge. During the procedure, the doctor will inject x-ray dye into a milk duct(s). This dye is also called the contrast agent. Then, they use a mammogram to see the inside of the milk duct(s).



### What will it feel like?

A galactogram can be a bit uncomfortable, but usually not painful. A galactogram can be painful if there is not enough discharge. This makes it harder to find the opening of the milk duct. That is why it is important to follow the instructions in the next section.

## **Before your galactogram**

### **How can I prepare for my galactogram?**

Do this **as early as possible**:

- Ask a family member or friend to take you home. You can also bring someone for support during your appointment.

Do this **2 days before** your galactogram:

- Do not squeeze your breast or nipple. This will help to ensure there is enough discharge for the galactogram. If there is not enough nipple discharge, your galactogram may be cancelled.

Do this **the morning** of your galactogram:

- Take your regular medicines.
- Eat and drink normally.
- Wear comfortable clothes. Wear a 2-piece outfit that will be easy to take off and put on.

### **What should I bring to the appointment?**

- Your health card (OHIP card). If you do not have an OHIP card, please bring another form of government photo ID (such as a driver's license, passport, or other provincial health card).
- A family member or friend who can take you home.

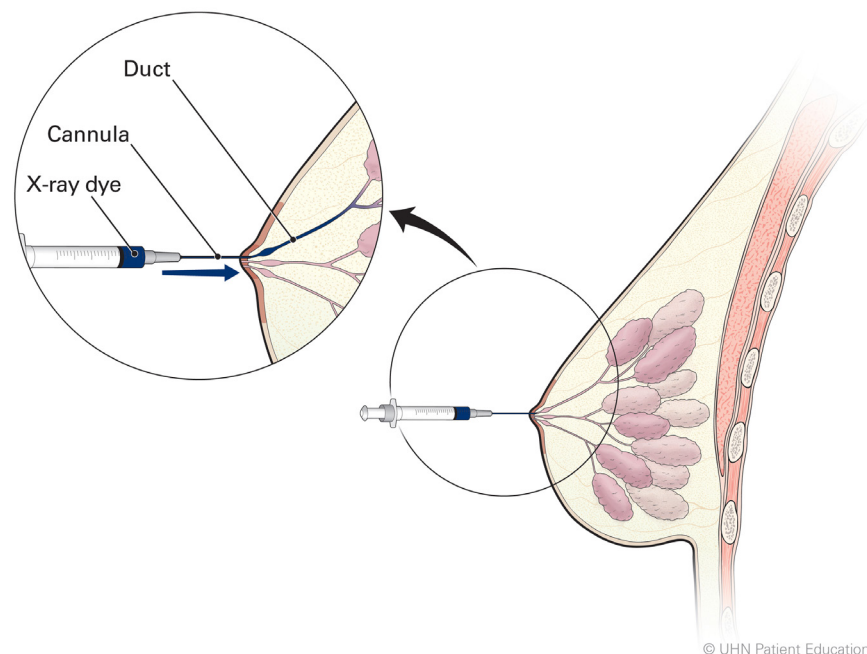
## During the galactogram

### Who will do my galactogram?

A breast radiologist and technologist will perform the galactogram. A breast radiologist is a doctor who is specialized in breast imaging.

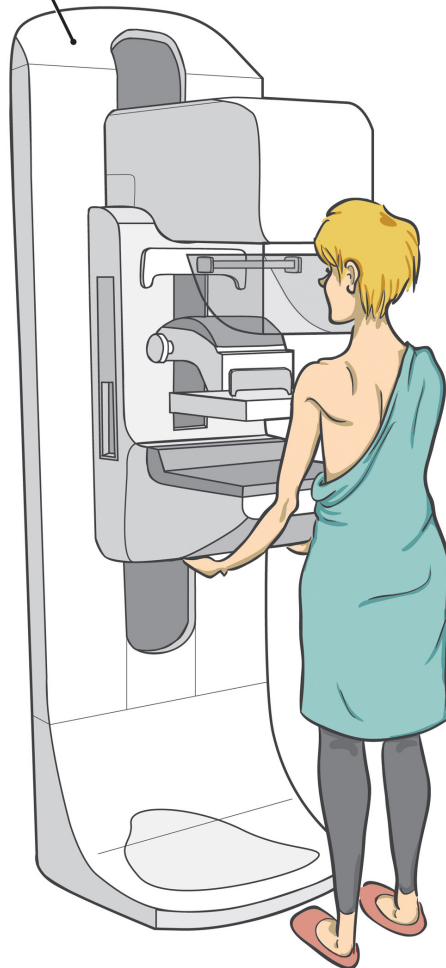
### What happens during a galactogram?

1. The radiologist and the technologist will review your mammogram and/or ultrasound images.
2. A warm towel may be applied to your breast. This will help your ducts release the discharge. This will show the radiologist which duct needs to be tested.
3. A small tube with a blunt tip be will be slowly inserted into the discharging duct. The tube is called a cannula.
4. Once the cannula is in the duct, a small amount of x-ray dye is injected.
5. You may feel fullness or pressure in your breast. But, you should not feel sharp pain or burning. If you do feel pain, tell your radiologist.

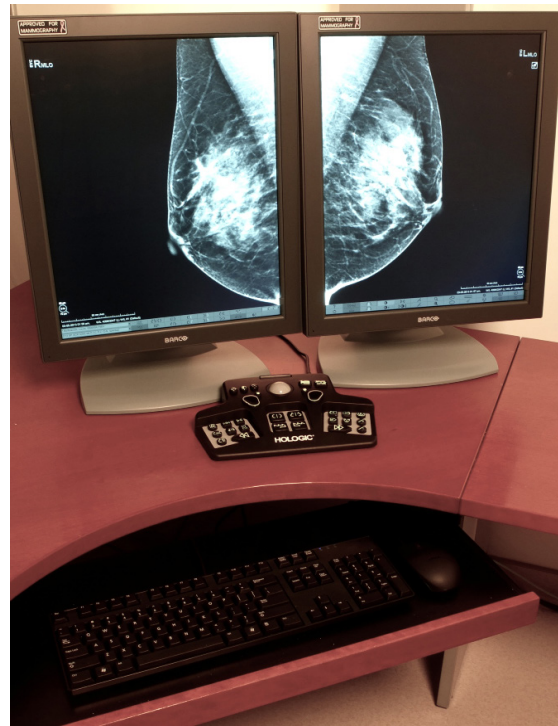


6. Mammogram images will be taken of your ducts. If needed, your radiologist may request an ultrasound.

Mammogram machine



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Be relaxed, breathe normally and stay still for the entire test.

### How long does the galactogram take?

You will be in the department of Breast Imaging for about 1 to 2 hours.

## **After your galactogram**

### **How can I take care of myself after the galactogram?**

You do not need to do anything special after the test.

Most of the dye from the galactogram will be absorbed by your body. But, it is normal to have some nipple discharge after the procedure. This caused by the dye that was used.

### **When will my results be ready?**

Your nurse practitioner will let you know after the testing appointment.

They will give you an appointment card with the time and place for your 2nd appointment to talk about the test results. This appointment may be on the day of testing or it may be a few days later.

## **How can I deal with stress during this time?**

Getting tested for breast changes can be stressful. It is normal to have feelings of anxiety and distress.

These feelings can change over time. It may not be the same while you are waiting to receive testing. It may change during testing. It may also change while you are waiting for your results. Each person's experience is different. There is no right or wrong way to feel about this. This experience may mean different things to different people.

Think about what has helped you get through stressful and uncertain times in the past.

Try these tips to see if they offer you some relief:

- ✓ Talk to a supportive partner, family member or friend.
- ✓ Do an activity to help keep your mind busy. Try something you enjoy. Focusing on something other than the tests and results may help. This can include reading, listening to music, going to a movie, seeking spiritual guidance or going for a walk.
- ✓ Read trusted health information. This may help if you prefer to be informed before testing and while you wait for your results. The Princess Margaret Patient and Family Library has many resources for patients and families. Find out more about the Library below.

If you would like to speak to someone about your concerns or feelings, please let your health care team know.

## Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, go to:

- Patient and Family Library  
Main atrium, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre  
Phone: 416 946 4501 extension 5383  
Website: [www.library.theprincessmargaret.ca](http://www.library.theprincessmargaret.ca)

The Patient and Family Library offers trusted information about:

- cancer
- cancer treatment and care
- support organizations and services
- much more

Here you will find computer stations, books, brochures, DVDs, audio books, electronic books and CDs. Trained staff and volunteers can help with your questions and help you to find the information and resources you need.



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