

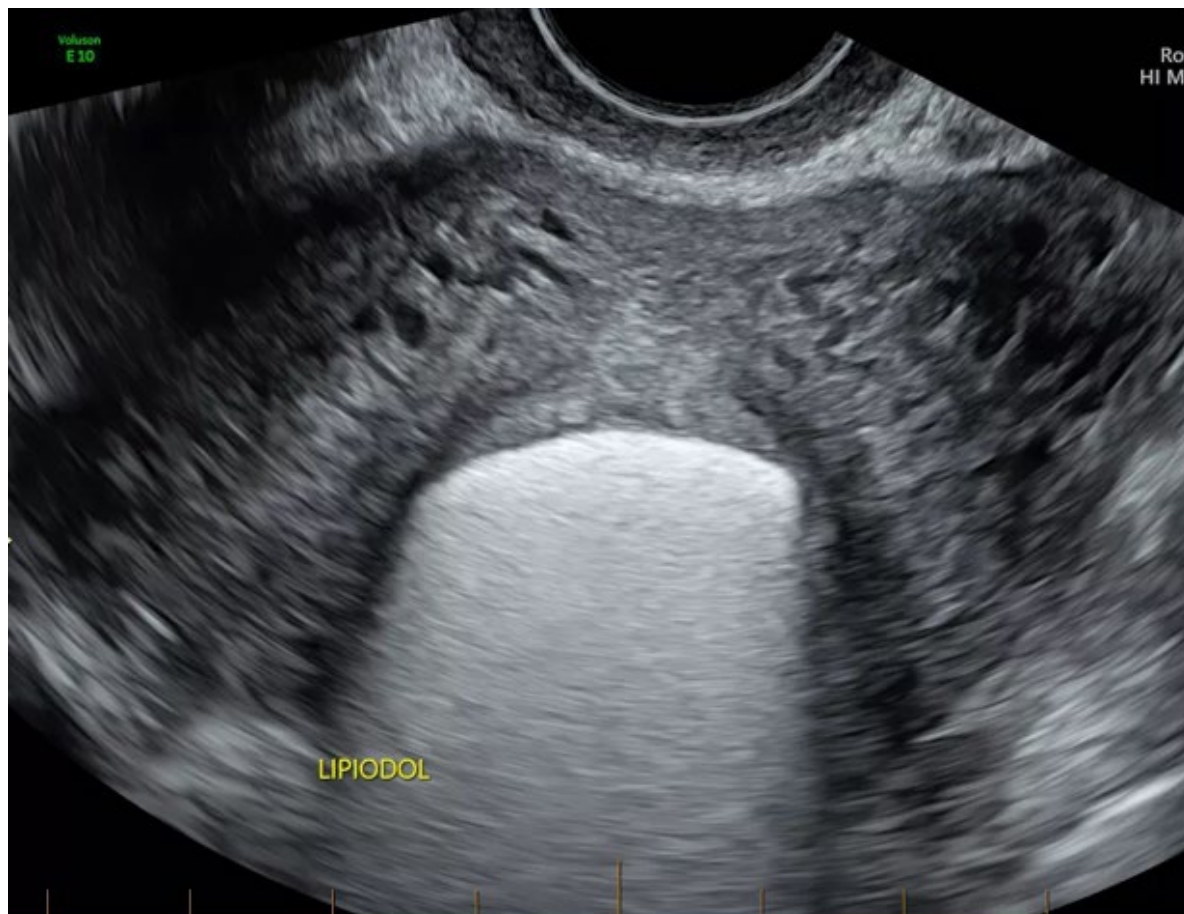


Lipiodol Tubal Flushing

What is Lipiodol Tubal Flushing?

Lipiodol is a liquid contrast agent made from poppy seed oil. It was originally found to be useful because it contains iodine which makes it radio-opaque. However, we no longer need to use x-rays but use ultrasound to follow its flow. To make the Lipiodol visible with ultrasound, we aerate it before its instillation.

Recent studies have shown that Lipiodol tubal flushing improves the chances of pregnancy.



The white in the centre of the image is Lipiodol within the uterine cavity.

How is the procedure done?

Allcare Gynaecology uses ultrasound guidance to avoid radiation exposure. When you come for your procedure, our doctor inserts a sterile speculum into the vagina and the cervix is washed with antiseptic.

A soft narrow plastic tube is then inserted into the uterus so that the Lipiodol can be introduced into the uterus and Fallopian tubes. With a simultaneous transvaginal ultrasound examination being conducted by the sonographer, the Lipiodol can be visualised passing into the uterus, out both Fallopian tubes and spilling into the pelvis.

This tubal flushing appears to improve the chances of pregnancy in the next 6 months after the procedure.

How does it improve the chances of pregnancy?

In recent papers, the Lipiodol flush procedure was shown to improve the chances of pregnancy. The exact mechanism has not yet been confirmed, but it is believed that the Lipiodol may:

- help embryos implant into the endometrium
- clear out the Fallopian tubes
- alter the balance of macrophage and other immunological cell activity around the tubes and ovaries.



Who is not suitable for the procedure?

Women with an Iodine allergy

As Lipiodol contains Iodine, it is not suitable for women who have a history of Iodine allergy.

NB: Iodine may also interfere with the function of the thyroid gland. If you have a thyroid problem, you should discuss the risk with your doctor first.

Women who are already pregnant or could have conceived this cycle

If you believe you may have conceived or are already pregnant, Lipiodol flushing should not be performed as we do not want to disturb the pregnancy.

To ensure that you are not pregnant on the day of the procedure, our care team will usually book an appointment date **before day 12 of your cycle, but after bleeding has ceased.**

Women with blocked tubes

Lipiodol flushing is only appropriate for women who have functioning Fallopian tubes as we do not want to intentionally inject the Lipiodol and have it collecting in blocked tubes as this increases the chances of complications.

Allcare Gynaecology therefore recommend that tubal patency be confirmed before a Lipiodol flushing procedure. *If you have had a previous tubal patency test, please bring a copy of your previous hystero-salpingogram (HSG), hystero-contrast-sonography (HyCoSy) or laparoscopy and dye report to your appointment.*

If tubal patency has not been assessed previously, it can be done at the time of the Lipiodol flushing, with air aerated saline. The disadvantage of this approach means that the whole procedure takes longer and maybe harder for you to tolerate. There is also no good evidence about whether flushing with saline before the Lipiodol affects the results or the pregnancy outcomes.

Women with a risk of pelvic infection

Neither Lipiodol tubal flushing nor HyCoSy should be performed in women with suspected pelvic infection. If you have a concern about a history of pelvic infection, please discuss the option of prophylactic antibiotics with your referring doctor before booking your procedure.

What are the risks and complications?

Lipiodol tubal flushing is a minimally invasive procedure that is well tolerated and is associated with a very low risk of side effects.

The known risks of the Lipiodol flushing are:

- allergic reaction to Iodine - This is more common if there are blocked tubes and high pressures are used during the procedure which could result in Lipiodol entering blood vessels of the uterus directly.
- Lipiodol can persist in the pelvic cavity for several weeks. There does not appear to be any harmful effects arising from this. It is eventually absorbed.
- rarely, the procedure may activate pelvic inflammation
- granuloma formation - This is a chronic inflammatory response to Lipiodol and in extremely rare circumstances, could lead to the need for surgery. An example would be to remove an inflamed Fallopian tube affected by a granuloma.

