

A hysterosalpingogram, often called an HSG, is a test performed in radiology to determine whether or not the fallopian tubes are healthy. The HSG is an important test. Healthy fallopian tubes are essential to becoming pregnant, as they serve as a pathway between the uterus (where a pregnancy implants), and the ovary (where the eggs are located). Shortly after ovulation, the fallopian tube will pick up the newly released egg from the ovary, and provide a pathway through which sperm swimming through the uterus from the vagina can reach the egg. Fertilization of the egg by the sperm occurs at the far end of the fallopian tube closest to the ovary, called the ampulla. After egg fertilization by sperm, the fallopian tube pushes the fertilized egg towards the uterus in a journey that takes 3-4 days. Infections, inflammation, and sometimes endometriosis can lead to blocked or damaged fallopian tubes, preventing the tube from picking up the egg and causing infertility. If the tube is open but damaged then a pregnancy in the fallopian tube, called an ectopic pregnancy, can occur. The HSG involves placing a catheter in the uterus, and filling the uterus with a special liquid called radio-opaque contrast, which can be seen on a radiograph to give a picture of the uterus. Once the uterus is filled with contrast, the contrast will migrate down the fallopian tubes to give an outline of the tubes as well. In this way we can determine if the tubes are open. There are many comments on the internet about discomfort during the HSG test, but the test need not be difficult. With proper preparation including pre-treatment with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicine, the test is tolerable, and should in most instances only take a few minutes.