

# Flow rate & post-void residual

## Department of Urology

### What is a flow rate & post-void residual?

A flow rate is a test that is used to show how quickly and effectively you empty your bladder. The post-void residual is the volume of urine left in your bladder after you have passed urine. Both tests are useful to help identify the cause of your bladder/ urinary symptoms and will help your doctor know what will be the best treatment.

### Before the test

You may have been asked to complete a 'bladder diary', 'frequency-volume chart', or a questionnaire, such as 'IPSS' or 'ICIQ'. If so, please bring these with you on the day of your test. If you have lost or did not receive one you will be able to complete the questionnaire while you wait. The completed documents will be uploaded to your electronic health record. Please allow a couple of weeks between your flow test and your follow up for the records to be scanned.

### On the day preparation for the test

In order to obtain an accurate and reliable result it is important that you pass sufficient urine during the test. Therefore, you should **drink approximately 1 litre of water in the 2 hours prior to the test so that your bladder is 'comfortably full'** by the time you are ready to perform the test. If you have a long journey to hospital or find it difficult to hold your urine then you may prefer to begin drinking when you arrive in the hospital. If you do find it difficult to hold your urine, let your nurse know when you arrive, but try not to pass urine until you have spoken to the nurse.

You will be given water to drink and will have **plenty of time to allow your bladder to fill**. It is very important you do not rush, since doing the test when your bladder is not full may mean the result is not useful and the test may need to be repeated on another day. Please take all your regular medications. If you find it difficult to hold your urine, it may best to avoid caffeinated drinks. If you think you may have a urine infection it is best to reschedule the test and see your GP.

### During the test

When you feel your bladder is '**comfortably full**' inform your nurse that you are ready for the test. **Do not 'overflow' your bladder**. You will be taken to a private room where you will be asked to pass urine into a special machine. The machine will produce a printed trace that will be interpreted by your doctor at the time of your follow up appointment. A 'dipstick' test of the urine will also be performed to look for signs of a urine infection. If there are signs of an infection, you will be asked to give a further urine sample, collected in a special container that will be sent for analysis. This takes at least 48 hours and you will then be contacted if you require antibiotics. The result of this analysis is usually readily available to your GP.

After doing the flow rate you will be asked to lie down on a couch and an ultrasound scan of your tummy will be performed to measure how much urine is still left in your bladder. The scan involves a small amount of jelly to be placed on your tummy which can be easily wiped off afterwards.

## After the test

Occasionally, it may be necessary to repeat the test on another day if the quality of the test was not good enough (for example, if you only passed a small amount of urine). Please let the nurse know if you think your flow during the test was not representative of your typical urination.

## How long will the test take?

Depending upon how full your bladder is when you arrive and how long it takes to fill, you should allow **1-4 hours** for the test.

## Will I see a consultant at this appointment?

No you won't. You will be given a follow up appointment with your doctor where he/she will review the result of the flow rate and post-void residual and discuss with you the best course of action to improve your symptoms.

If you have any questions or would like further information please contact the Urology team at Ashford and St Peter's Hospital on 01932 728654 or at [asp-tr.urologypatientcare@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.urologypatientcare@nhs.net)

## Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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**We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.**



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