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# Anorectal Physiology Studies

## INTRODUCTION

You have been referred by your doctor for anorectal physiology studies. Patients are usually referred for these investigations because they have a certain type of symptom. These include faecal incontinence, constipation, difficulty emptying their bowel or require obstetric assessment.

Please allow 1 hour for the completion of your test.

## WHAT IS ANORECTAL PHYSIOLOGY STUDIES?

These tests assess the strength and function of the anal sphincter muscles. The tests also look at the coordination of these muscles, and how much volume the rectum can hold.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR ANORECTAL PHYSIOLOGY STUDIES

There is no preparation required for this test. You may eat and drink as normal before the test. Please continue to take your usual medication.

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### 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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## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require any additional information concerning the investigations or any advice please contact:

Fatima Meskin, Clinical Scientist, Anorectal Physiology, St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey

Anorectal department contact number: 01932 723421

Additional information may be obtained by logging on to websites of the following useful organisations:

- **Guts UK**  
<https://gutscharity.org.uk/>
- **Bowel and Bladder Community**  
<https://www.bladderandbowel.org/>
- **NHS Bowel Incontinence**  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-incontinence/>
- **NHS Constipation**  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/constipation/>

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING ANORECTAL PHYSIOLOGY STUDIES

After your written consent has been obtained, you will be asked detailed questions about your symptoms, and you may be asked to complete symptom score sheets.

After a history has been taken, we will commence the tests. There are two tests that we perform, which will take approximately 30 minutes. We will ask you to lie on your left-hand side. The first test involves inserting a small catheter (tube) a few centimetres into your back passage. We will ask you to perform certain manoeuvres to test the strength of your sphincters such as squeezing and coughing. We will then inflate a small balloon that is attached to the catheter to assess sensation. To assess the coordination of your anal muscles we will ask you to push down on the balloon.

The second part of the test is an endoanal ultrasound scan. This takes an ultrasound image of the anal muscles. A tube, about 2cm in diameter is inserted a few centimetres into the back passage.

The whole process will take approximately one hour.

## WHEN CAN I EXPECT THE RESULTS?

The report is usually finalised within a week and sent to your referring doctor who will then decide on the next steps. These may be further tests or discussion at our Pelvic Floor Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting. You will receive a copy of your results

in the post. If you have any questions at the time of your appointment, please feel free to ask the member of staff performing your test.

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND RISKS?**

These tests will help your doctor to accurately diagnose your bowel problem. It will also assist the doctor on how to best manage your symptoms and decide the best course of treatment. There are no risks associated with anorectal physiology studies. Most commonly patients may find the tests uncomfortable.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **ARE THERE ANY ALTERNATIVE TESTS?**

There are no alternatives available.

### **WILL IT BE PAINFUL?**

The test should not be painful. The test may seem embarrassing but it is a common test performed by the department and your privacy and dignity is maintained at all times. If you are in pain, please let the staff member performing your tests know and they will stop.

### **WILL I BE ABLE TO GO ABOUT MY NORMAL ACTIVITIES AFTER THE TEST?**

Yes, the tests do not require sedation or anaesthetic and you will be free to leave once they are complete.