

High Resolution Anorectal Manometry, Endo-anal Ultrasound, Pelvic Floor Ultrasound and Vaginal Ultrasound

Information and advice for patients

GI Physiology

What is the test?

Your consultant has requested that you have some tests to investigate the function and structure of the muscles in your anal canal (back passage) and pelvic floor. These tests can help find a cause for your symptoms.

We understand that you may have concerns about having this type of test and we would like to reassure you that all tests are conducted in a quiet private room and the scientist or nurse performing your test will ensure your privacy and comfort is maintained at all times.

This leaflet has been written to give you more information about the tests you are going to have and to ease any concerns that you may have.

The requested tests include:

- High Resolution Anorectal Manometry
- Endo-anal Ultrasound
- Pelvic Floor Ultrasound (females only)
- Vaginal ultrasound (females only)

What is High Resolution Anorectal Manometry?

High Resolution Anorectal Manometry assesses the function of muscles and nerves in your back passage. During the test a small thin tube (catheter), with a small balloon attached will be inserted into your back passage. With the tube in place you will be asked to perform a variety of manoeuvres such as squeezing and relaxing your muscles. Then the balloon will be inflated with air to mimic the sensations of wanting to use the toilet. Please do not worry, it will not make you go to the toilet. The balloon simulates these sensations to allow the scientist/nurse to assess your awareness to different volumes of air. Once this is complete the tube is removed. This takes around 10 minutes.

What is Endo-anal Ultrasound?

This test looks at the structure of the muscles in your back passage. To do this a probe is gently placed into the back passage and scans (pictures) of the muscles are taken. As with the High Resolution Anorectal Manometry this procedure can be a little uncomfortable, but is not painful, and takes around 5 minutes.

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What is Pelvic Floor Ultrasound?

During this scan you will be asked to lie on your back with your knees bent. A surface ultrasound probe will be placed on the skin between your back passage and vagina, (called the perineum) and you will be asked to squeeze and relax your pelvic floor muscles. This scan provides an overview of the muscles of the pelvic floor and to see surface and deep pelvic structures in more detail. This takes around 5 minutes.

FOR THIS TEST PLEASE ARRIVE WITH A FULL BLADDER

What is vaginal ultrasound?

This scan is optional but allows for a complete examination of the pelvic floor muscles. During this scan a probe is gently inserted into the vagina and images are taken of the structure of the muscles of the vaginal wall. This scan takes around 5 minutes.

What are the benefits of the tests?

These tests investigate the function and structure of the muscles in your back passage and pelvic floor. By investigating these they can help find a cause for your symptoms.

Are there any side effects or risks?

All the tests are safe and should not be painful but may be slightly uncomfortable. There is a very small risk that the tubes or probes could damage the lining of the back passage or vagina.

What are the risks of not having the tests?

These tests are an important part of the investigation and the future management of your bowel/pelvic floor condition. The results assist your doctor in planning appropriate treatment for you, so it is important you keep your appointment.

Are there any alternatives to these tests?

These tests are the gold standard for investigation into how the muscles in your back passage and the pelvic floor are working.

There is another test called a Defecating Proctogram which uses x-rays to examine how your rectum functions during the emptying of your bowels. However this test is usually performed as a complimentary test alongside these tests.

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Preparing for the test

Do I need to do anything before my appointment?

You can eat and drink as normal and continue to take any medication that you would normally take. You do not need to use any bowel preparation (laxative or enema) prior to your appointment. We ask that women come to the appointment with a full bladder as this assists in the pelvic floor ultrasound test.

Do I need to bring anything with me?

No. You are welcome to bring along somebody for support if you require, however they will be asked to remain in the waiting area whilst you undergo the tests.

Where do I go?

The GI Physiology department is located at Sandwell Hospital in Clinic 6B of the Outpatients department, on the 1st floor. On arrival please check in at the Endoscopy Unit reception desk. You will be asked to take a seat in the Clinic 6B waiting area. The scientist or nurse performing your tests will then take you into a private room and discuss the tests with you.

During the test

What should I expect?

- The scientist or nurse performing your test will greet you and invite you into a private room to discuss the tests in full with you. They will ask you questions relating to your symptoms and you will be asked to sign a consent form.
- The person performing the tests will fully explain the tests and explain the benefits, risks and alternatives before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the tests please ask for more information and the person performing your test will be happy to provide this.
- During your tests a chaperone will be present at all times
- Following this you will be asked to remove clothing covering your lower body and you will be asked to lie on a couch on your left side. Prior to this curtains will be pulled around you to ensure your privacy. You will also be given a sheet to cover your lower body to help maintain your privacy.

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- Prior to the tests a quick and simple rectal and vaginal examination will be carried out to ensure the safe passage of the investigation probes, the tests will then be conducted as previously stated. If at any point you do not wish to proceed with the test then please say and the person performing your test will stop.
- The tests usually take approximately 60 minutes from start to finish
- These tests can be a little uncomfortable but are not painful and do not require general anaesthetic or sedation.

After the test

The tests should not have any adverse effects. We provide wipes and pads should you need any.

Going home

As these tests do not require any sedation, you will be able to travel / drive /go home straight after the tests and can resume all normal activities straight away.

Follow-up

The tests will be analysed and the results will be sent to the specialist that referred you. They will explain and discuss your results with you at your next appointment with them.

Symptoms to report

The test area and equipment is disinfected thoroughly after each use. Seek medical advice if you develop a fever/high temperature, above 38.°C.

Contact details

If you have any questions about the tests please contact the GI Physiology Department on:
0121 507 2490

The department is open Monday – Friday 8.00am to 4.00pm

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Further information

NHS Website

Bowel incontinence.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-incontinence/>

NHS Website

Constipation.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/constipation/>

NHS Website

Ultrasound Scan.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ultrasound-scan/>

(Websites accessed 19 March 2021)

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

Carrington, E. V., Heinrich, H., & All members of the International Anorectal Physiology Working Group. (2020). The international anorectal physiology working group (IAPWG) recommendations: Standardized testing protocol and the London classification for disorders of anorectal function. *Neurogastroenterology & Motility*, 32(1), e13679.

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