



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Ano-Rectal Physiology Tests

Information for patients



You have been asked to come for an appointment for ano-rectal physiology tests. This leaflet has been written to answer the most frequently asked questions about this test. It is not intended to replace the discussion between you and your Doctor, but may act as a starting point for further discussion.

What happens during the procedure?

The first test involves passing a small tube (about the width of a pencil), with a deflated balloon on the end of it, into your back passage, to a depth of approximately 10cm. You will be asked to relax and at intervals squeeze your back passage with the tube in place.

The small balloon will then be slowly inflated and you will be asked to tell the clinician when you are aware of three different sensations. The balloon is then deflated before being removed.

The second test involves placing an ultrasound probe, about the size of a thumb, into your back passage. This will show us the structure of the muscle in your back passage.

Frequently asked questions:

Q: What are these tests for?

Ano-rectal physiology tests give us important information on the function of your back passage and rectum. The pressure of your sphincter (anal canal muscle) can be measured and the sensation inside your rectum can be assessed. Ultrasound allows us to see the structure of your back passage, so that any damage can be seen.

Q: Will these tests be painful?

No. The majority of people who have experienced these tests report that they are uncomfortable but not painful. There is a small amount of water used in these tests, which can sometimes cause a very slight stinging sensation if you have damaged anal skin.

Q: Will these tests be messy?

No. A very small amount of water is used to obtain one of the measurements and a clear jelly is also used to minimise any discomfort.

Q: What will I have to do on the day?

We request that you lower your underwear and lie on your left side on a couch with your knees bent. There is no need to completely remove any item of clothing or your shoes, unless you feel more comfortable doing so.

Q: Do I need to empty my bowel before I have this test?

No. Bowel preparation is not necessary.

Q: Can I be sedated to have these tests?

No. Sedation is not necessary, because only the last few centimetres of the bowel is being examined.

Q: (Women) Does it matter if I have my period?

No. It does not affect the outcome of these tests.

Q: How long will I be in the hospital?

These tests take approximately 30 minutes, but you may be with the clinician for up to 1 hour.

Q: Who will be in the room during these tests?

There will be the person performing the tests and an Assistant Practitioner to help with the tests.

Occasionally there will be visiting students, doctors or nurses, however you will be asked whether you would be happy to allow anyone extra into the room, prior to the tests.

Q: Will these tests tell me if I have cancer?

No. These tests are not performed to determine whether there is a cancer present.

Q: When will I get the results?

Your results will be sent to the referring consultant and you will be informed at your next appointment with the Consultant.

Q: Will I be able to drive home after the tests?

Yes. These tests will not affect your ability to concentrate or drive.

Q: What happens next?

After these tests you should receive a follow-up appointment with the relevant Consultant/Doctor. If you have not heard from them within four weeks of your appointment, please call the hospital's main switchboard and ask to speak to the relevant secretary, or phone your GP's surgery.

Other information

Please bring with you a list of any medications you are taking, including over the counter and herbal remedies.

If you know that you are pregnant, please contact the department to discuss your appointment.

If you have any further questions that cannot wait until the day of your appointment please contact the **GI Physiology** department:

Tel: **01865 235 881**
01865 235 883

(during office hours)

Email: pelvicfloor.advice@ouh.nhs.uk

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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