

Flow Rate and Bladder Scan

This leaflet explains more about your flow rate and bladder scan, including the benefits, risks and any alternatives and what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is a flow rate test?

This test records the rate at which you pass urine and the amount you pass. It is carried out to assess the changes you have experienced in your usual flow of urine.

To record this information, you will be asked to pass urine into a special machine, within a private room in the outpatient clinic.

What is a bladder scan?

After your flow rate test, it may be necessary to scan your abdomen to determine whether you have emptied your bladder fully or retained some urine. This is a painless procedure. A small amount of gel is put on your abdomen and an ultrasound probe is used to obtain a picture of your bladder onto a screen. Any residual urine is shown on the screen and the volume is calculated.

What are the risks?

There are no side effects to either of these tests and you can resume your normal activities immediately afterwards.

Why should I have a flow rate and bladder scan?

This test can help to identify if you have an obstruction preventing you from emptying your bladder correctly. The bladder scan is to see if you are leaving urine behind in your bladder.

How can I prepare for a flow rate and bladder scan?

You can drink water before you attend your visit and please arrive with a full bladder if possible.

Asking for your consent

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your care. You will not be asked for written consent but the procedure will be explained in detail prior to the test. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

What happens during a flow rate and bladder scan?

The procedure takes about 30-45 minutes. This is a painless investigation and does not require any type of anaesthetic or sedation during the procedure.

Will I feel any pain?

There is no pain or discomfort during the tests. You may feel slightly bloated after the test due to the amount of water you have drunk.

On the day of the procedure

You may eat and drink as normal before your appointment.

For an accurate flow rate recording to be achieved, we require you to have a (comfortably) full bladder before passing urine (this is usually the same feeling you would have when you normally go to the toilet at home).

If you pass less than 150mls of urine the test results may not be able to be analysed. This may mean that you will need to repeat the test on another visit to clinic.

If possible we would like you to drink several cups of fluid (maximum of four to five glasses of water would be appropriate) before attending the urology clinic and not to pass urine until you have spoken to a nurse.

If you do not feel ready to do the test when you arrive at the clinic, you will be given a drink. The length of time you need to stay in the department depends upon when you are able to perform a satisfactory flow test.

Arriving at the department with a full bladder will reduce your waiting time, although if you experience problems such as frequency or urgency, we understand it may be difficult for you to travel with a full bladder.

What happens after the procedure?

After your flow rate test and scan, the nurse or doctor will speak to you or write to you about the results and any subsequent treatment and/or any necessary further appointments.

What do I need to do after I go home?

You can return home straight after the tests and continue life as normal.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will receive a follow-up appointment to see your doctor for the results of the test.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, please contact the Urology Nurse Specialists on 020 8725 3264.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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