

Anorectal Physiology Studies

This leaflet explains more about anorectal physiology studies, 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 are 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 the volume the rectum can hold. It also involves taking an ultrasound image of the anal canal to assess for any defects in the musculature. 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 after child birth.

This test takes place at Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton.

Why should I have Anorectal Physiology Studies?

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.

What are the risks?

There are no risks associated with anorectal physiology studies. Most commonly patients may find the tests uncomfortable.

Are there any alternatives?

There are no alternatives.

How can I 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.

Asking for your consent

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your care. For this investigation we take consent. You will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you agree to have the investigation and understand what it involves. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy using the contact details provided at the end of this document.

What happens during the test?

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 appointment will take approximately one hour.

Will I feel any pain?

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.

What happens after the test?

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

When will I receive my results?

When the test is complete, the clinical scientist will talk you through the results. The report will then be finalised and sent to your referring doctor who will then decide on the next steps. 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. If you do not know if you have a follow-up appointment arranged with your referring team, please contact the outpatient booking team on 0208 725 0300 or 0208 725 0338.

Useful addresses

Anorectal Physiology Department

Suite 2 – Ground Floor
Queen Mary's Hospital
Roehampton Lane
London
SW15 5PN

Useful sources of information

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

- **The Digestive Diseases Foundation** www.digestivedisorders.org.uk
- **Bowel and Bladder Foundation** <https://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org/>
- **NHS Bowel Incontinence** <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Incontinence-bowel/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
- **NHS Constipation** <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Constipation/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please email us using giphsiologyqueries@stgeorges.nhs.uk, which is regularly checked. Alternatively, please contact Dr Jamal Hayat's secretary on 020 8725 3569 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

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 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (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
