

*Better
Together*

Patient information

Ano-rectal Physiology Investigations

Gastro Intestinal (GI) Measurements Unit
Royal Liverpool Hospital

Introduction

This leaflet has been produced to give you general information about your ano-rectal physiology investigations.

Most of your questions should be answered by this leaflet. It is **not** intended to replace the discussion between you and your doctor, but may act as a starting point for discussion.

If after reading it you have any concerns or require further explanation, please discuss this with a member of the healthcare team who has been caring for you.

What is ano-rectal physiology?

You have probably been troubled by bowel symptoms for example constipation or faecal incontinence.

Following discussion with your doctor, they have advised you to have ano-rectal physiology investigations.

Any alternative treatments or procedures will have been discussed at your initial consultation with your referring practitioner.

Ano-rectal physiology tests are used to assess the muscle and nerve function in the anal canal and rectum in patients with a variety of bowel disorders.

Depending on your symptoms there may be several different tests; these include pressure studies (manometry) which measure the pressure in the anal canal and sensory function, which assesses sensations of the rectum.

Why do I need ano-rectal physiology?

Ano-rectal physiology investigations will help your healthcare professional to identify if there are any problems with your anal canal, rectum and the nerves supplying the rectum and anal canal.

Can there be any complications or risks?

Very rarely some patients have experienced minor bleeding such as spotting on the toilet paper. The entrance to your bottom (the anus) does have a very good blood supply and this is where piles can be found, the insertion of the physiology equipment may cause a little bleeding. This usually resolves on its own.

Some of the equipment used during your investigations may contain latex. Patients who have a latex allergy are asked to inform the department before they attend so we can prepare the examination room.

Ano-rectal investigations are not usually performed within the first three months of pregnancy. If you think you may be pregnant please inform the department so an alternative appointment can be arranged.

How do I prepare for ano-rectal physiology?

Please read the information leaflet. Share the information it contains with your partner and family (if you wish) so that they can be of help and support. There may be information they need to know, especially if they are taking care of you following this examination.

Please ensure that you have opened your bowels within **two days** before your appointment. If you are unlikely to do so please speak to your family doctor (GP) or consultant for advice before your test.

You can eat and drink as normal.

What will happen?

You should go to the Gastrointestinal (GI) Measurement Unit, which is situated on the ground floor in the corridor behind L clinic at the Royal Liverpool Hospital.

You will be seen by a member of staff from the GI Measurement Unit who will be performing the ano-rectal physiology investigations in an examination room.

You will be asked to remove your lower clothing and lay on your left side on the examination couch. The pressure tests initially involve a thin tube with a deflated balloon attached being inserted into the anal canal and lower rectum, following which you will be asked to cough, squeeze and push down. The balloon attached to the catheter will be inflated with air during the test to assess sensory function of the anorectum.

The test should be completed within 45 – 50 minutes.

Once your physiology investigations are completed you will be able to get dressed and return to your normal activities.

You will not be sedated for your investigations – you will therefore be able to travel or drive as normal.

What happens afterwards?

You will be able to resume your normal activities after your ano-rectal physiology investigations.

The consultant will receive the results of the test within two weeks of the investigation.

General advice and consent

Most of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion with your healthcare professional. You will be asked to sign a consent form and you should be satisfied that you have received enough information before going ahead.

Consent to treatment

Before any doctor, nurse or therapist examines or treats you, they must seek your consent or permission. In order to make a decision, you need to have information from health professionals about the treatment or investigation which is being offered to you.

You should always ask more questions if you do not understand or if you want more information.

For ano-rectal physiology investigations you will be given both verbal and written information and after having time to ask questions, you will be asked to sign a consent form to show you have received enough information and you understand it.

Notes

Further information

Should you require further advice on the issues contained in this leaflet or have concerns following the procedure please contact the GI Measurement Unit.

Tel: 0151 706 3456

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3456

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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