

Patient Information

Pelvic Floor Service Bowel Function Tests

Introduction

This information about bowel function tests is intended for patients under the care of the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Pelvic Floor Team. Please ask if you need any further information

We understand how embarrassing bowel problems are so we will aim to maintain your privacy and dignity at all times during these tests. It is a good idea to try to empty your bowels before coming to the hospital and empty your bladder just beforehand. You may not need to undergo all of the following tests:

Colonoscopy is a telescope test that looks at the lining of your large bowel to rule out any abnormalities that may be causing your symptoms. You may be referred instead for a shorter telescope test called a **flexible sigmoidoscopy**. You will be given some medicine to clear out your bowels and a special diet before the test.

Anorectal manometry is a test to assess the strength and tone of your anal sphincter muscles, rectal sensitivity and pelvic floor co-ordination. No special preparation is required.

Endoanal ultrasound is a scan that looks at the structure of the anal sphincter muscles just inside your bottom. No special preparation is required.

Defaecating proctogram is an x-ray test that looks at how effectively your rectum empties when you are on the toilet. When you attend for the test you will firstly be asked to drink some barium liquid which shows up your small bowel. Next whilst lying on a couch we insert a small amount of dilute barium to show up the vagina in ladies. We insert thick barium paste into your rectum using a thin plastic tube. No other preparation is required.

X-rays are taken whilst you attempt to evacuate on a specially designed commode behind privacy screens. You can watch the x-ray on a monitor. If you usually have to help the faeces out with your fingers we may ask you to do this manoeuvre too.

Bowel transit study is an x-ray test that looks at how quickly food travels through your digestive system. You will need to stop taking all laxative medications before and during the test. You will be asked to swallow a small capsule containing some beads which can be seen on x-ray. After 5 days we will take an x-ray of your abdomen to see how far the beads have travelled. You may eat and drink as normal during the test period.

Important! Please tell us before any x-ray tests if you think you may be pregnant.

Other tests or scans may also be required to rule out alternative causes for your symptoms. We will tell you about any additional tests if they are necessary. You will receive a clinic appointment to discuss the test results and treatment options.

Changing an appointment

All of these tests are highly specialised and appointments are therefore limited. Please give us as much notice as you can if you need to change your appointment. This will prevent any delays in your treatment and allow us to give your appointment slot to someone else.

Contact details for further information

Pelvic Floor Nurse Specialist

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Telephone: 01743 261083 (24hr answerphone)

Consultant Colorectal Surgeons

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Telephone: 01743 261460 or 01743 492359 (secretaries)

Radiology Department Enquiries

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Telephone: 01743 261000 ext 1150

Further information is available from;

- **Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

Other Sources of Information

- **The Pelvic Floor Society**

A national multi-professional body involved in supporting excellence in clinical practice, education and research, clinical standards, patient information and engagement in the commissioning of pelvic floor services.

Telephone: 020 7973 0307

Website: www.thepelvicfloorsociety.co.uk

- **Bladder and Bowel Foundation**

Information about bladder and bowel conditions, treatment and support

Telephone: 0870 770 3246

Website: www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org

- **NHS 111**

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: www.nhs.uk

- **Patient UK**

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: www.patient.info

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

Information Produced by: The Pelvic Floor Service

Date of Publication: Nov 2019

Due for Review on: Nov 2022

© SaTH NHS Trust