

Having Anorectal Tests Information Leaflet

What Are These Tests For?

Anorectal tests are offered here at LWH as part of the routine follow up for Obstetric Anal Sphincter Injury (OASI). This is due to the fact that women that have had these types of tears are more likely to experience difficulty controlling the muscles around the back passage. This may be because the anal sphincter muscles have become weak or damaged. This may cause you to have urgency or leakage of stools (faecal incontinence), or you may have trouble with controlling wind (flatal incontinence). Anorectal studies enable us to gain a better understanding about how your tear has healed and how your back passage is functioning.

What Are Anorectal Tests?

There are two different tests that provide information about the sphincter muscles and how they are working. These are:-

- **Endo-anal ultrasound**

This uses ultrasound to provide an image of the anal sphincter muscles to see if there are any defects present. An ultrasound probe is passed into the back passage and gently withdrawn to allow different views of the anal sphincter to be seen.

- **Anorectal manometry**

This provides information on the strength of the anal sphincter muscles and its ability to relax and contract. A small flexible tube is passed through the back passage into the rectum. On the end of this tube is a transducer that records the pressure inside. During this test the tube is slowly pulled outwards from the back passage to the edge of the anal sphincter. You will be asked to squeeze the muscles in your back passage several times during this test, in the same way you do your pelvic floor exercises.

The appointment for these tests is 45 minutes; however the actual testing takes no more than 10 minutes to perform.

Where Will These Tests Take Place And Who Does Them?

These tests take place in the Urogynaecology Department and are done by a Doctor or the Urogynaecology Link Midwife. Sometimes there may be a member of staff who is training observing the tests, however you will be informed of this and you can decline to have them present.

Will I Need Any Special Medication And Will I Be Able To Take My Usual Medication?

The tests will be more comfortable for you if you have been able to empty your bowel prior to the test. No specific medications to empty the bowel, such as laxatives, are required for the tests. You should continue with any other medication that your doctor has prescribed for you.

Questionnaire

You will be asked to complete an online questionnaire (ePAQ) as part of your care. This is a self-assessment questionnaire which gives us more information about your symptoms. It is confidential.

What Will Happen When I Arrive At The Urogynaecology Department?

You will need to use the self-check-in machines located in the main reception of the hospital or the gynaecology outpatient main reception. This then informs you of the waiting area you should head to and lets the staff know you are in attendance. You will then be called through by the Midwife when she is ready.

What Will Happen During The Tests?

- The Midwife will take you into the room where you will be asked questions similar to those you were asked when you attended for your 6-8 week follow up, regarding any bladder or bowel symptoms you may have experienced.
- Each test will be explained to you and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions.
- You will then be asked to change into a hospital gown and taken to the treatment room for the examination to be performed.
- You will then lie on your left side on an examination couch.
- You will have a sheet to put over you.
- When all the tests are complete you will be able to get dressed.
- Occasionally patients feel the need to go to the toilet immediately following the test. This is due to the stimulation of the rectum and is quite normal so no need to worry.

Are The Tests Painful?

You may have a feeling of pressure during the tests but they should not cause any pain. You can ask the person performing the tests to stop at any point if you are not comfortable.

Should I Attend If I Am On A Period?

Yes. Being on a period does not affect the results of the tests.

When Will I Get The Results Of My Test?

The Urogynaecology Consultant will see you after the examination and discuss the results with you. You will also be advised regarding the mode of delivery we would recommend for future pregnancies, depending on the results of the tests and taking into consideration any symptoms you may have.

If you have any questions about these tests you can contact the Urogynaecology Link Midwife on 0151 702 4321 for advice.

If you need to rearrange your appointment please telephone the Patient Appointment Centre on 0151 702 4328 (option 2) as early as possible.

Some useful resources:

www.rcog.org.uk

www.perineum.net

www.yourpelvicfloor.org

www.csp.org.uk

www.rcm.org.uk

This leaflet can be made available in difference formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

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