

Flow rates

What is a flow rate?

A flow rate merely involves passing urine into a flow rate machine when you have a strong urge to pass urine. The machine measures the rate and force of your flow and prints out a graph of your flow. From the pattern on the graph the nursing and medical team can determine how well you pass urine or if there is any obstruction.

When you arrive you will be seen by a nurse who will talk to you about the clinic and provide you with water to drink. You need to achieve a strong desire to pass urine before attempting a flow. If you are able to please attend your flow rate appointment with a full bladder ready to do your first flow.

You will usually be required to do **two** flow rates at this appointment so a comparison can be made between the two flow rates.

After you have passed urine for the second time, an ultrasound scan of your bladder will be undertaken by a nurse. Using gel and a probe onto the lower abdomen the nurse will assess how well you empty your bladder once you have urinated. This is a painless procedure.

You will not see a doctor at this appointment. You should have another appointment for the outpatient department in approximately one month's time from the flow rate appointment. However should the results of the flow rates and ultrasound scan indicate that you require seeing a doctor more urgently, this will be arranged.

What are the alternatives?

This is a non-invasive procedure and a basic investigation to aid in assessing urological symptoms. There is no alternative procedure; however, should you wish not to undertake the flow rates a consultation with the medical team would be necessary to discuss your symptoms.

What are the potential risks and side effects?

There are no risks associated with flow rates; it is no different from passing urine into your toilet at home.

What are the expected benefits of treatment?

By undertaking the flow rates, at the consultation appointment medical treatment may be initiated or the flow rates may indicate that an operation may be necessary to relieve you symptoms.

What should I do before I come into hospital?

Drink well the day before your appointment to make sure you are well hydrated. If you are able to, you should aim to attend the flow rate appointment with a full bladder. There are no special requirements for this procedure. You may eat and drink normally.

How long will I be in hospital?

You will be in the department for two to three hours depending on how long it takes you to undertake two flow rates.

Sources of information

For any queries or concerns about the appointment please contact:

Urology Investigation Suite Nursing Team - Conquest Hospital 0300 131 4500 Ext: 8468/8344
Eastbourne DGH 0300 131 4500 Ext: 770640

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Rebecca Rushton Specialist Urology Diagnostic Nurse
Simon Tyler-Murphy Lead Nurse Urology and Acute Continence Service

The directorate group that has agreed this patient information leaflet:
Diagnostic, Anaesthetic and Surgery – Urology

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Responsible clinician: Susan Crosby-Jones, Matron Urology Investigation Suite

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