

Anorectal Manometry

What is Anorectal Manometry?

Anorectal manometry is a test performed to evaluate patients with anorectal sphincter disorders. This test measures the pressures of the anal sphincter muscles, the sensation in the rectum, and the neural reflexes that are needed for normal bowel movements.

Why would I need this procedure?

Tightness of the sphincter muscles during a bowel movement can contribute to constipation, while weakness in the sphincter muscles can lead to faecal incontinence. Anorectal manometry can tell whether these muscles are working as they should.

There are different factors to consider such as vaginal delivery and previous surgery that can cause trauma to your anal sphincter that contribute to symptoms of faecal incontinence. Anal manometry will help us to diagnose and plan management of such condition.

What are the symptoms that have led to me having this procedure?

Anorectal manometry may be recommended to you if you have one of the following:

- Faecal incontinence - leakage of stool
- Chronic constipation.
- Dyssynergic defaecation - muscles and nerves within the pelvic floor are not functioning as they should.

The procedure

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown. Our Nurse Specialist will explain the procedure to you, take a brief health history and answer any questions you may have. You will be then asked to lie on your left side, with your knees raised so that a small flexible tube about the size of a thermometer is inserted in to the rectum.

The catheter is connected to a machine that measures the pressure. During the test, the Nurse will ask you to squeeze, relax and push at various times. The anal sphincter muscle pressures are measured during each of these manoeuvres. To squeeze, the patient tightens the sphincter muscles as if trying to prevent anything from coming out. To push or bear down, the patient strains down as if trying to have a bowel movement.

What can be learned from this procedure?

The anal and rectal area contains specialised muscles that are helpful to regulate proper passage of bowel movements. Normally, when stool enters the rectum, the anal sphincter muscle tightens to prevent passage of stool at any inconvenient time. If this muscle is weak or does not contract in a timely way, incontinence (leakage of stool) may occur. Normally when a person pushes or bears down to have a bowel movement, the sphincter muscle also tightens when pushing, this could contribute to constipation.

Anal manometry measures how strong the sphincter muscles are and whether they relax as they should during passing a stool. It provides helpful information to the doctor in treating patients with faecal incontinence or severe constipation.

There are many causes of faecal incontinence such as weak anal sphincter muscles or poor sensation in the rectum which can contribute to faecal incontinence. If these abnormalities are present, they can be treated with biofeedback techniques such as pelvic floor exercises which can strengthen the muscles and improve sensation.

What are the potential risks and side effects?

Anorectal manometry is a safe, low risk procedure and is unlikely to cause any pain. Equipment failure is a remote possibility.

What should I do before I come into hospital?

You will most likely be asked to give yourself one Fleet enema two hours prior to your study. You can purchase the Fleet enema from a pharmacy or supermarket. You can still eat and take your normal medications up until the time of the procedure.

Will I have an anaesthetic?

This procedure is carried out in outpatients and does not involve Local anaesthetic or sedation

How will I feel afterwards?

You may drive yourself home and go about your normal activities

How long will I be in hospital?

This test takes approximately 30 minutes.

Will I have to come back to hospital?

You will return to see the consultant to discuss the results in due course

Consent

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time after that withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

Sources of information

You can find National guidance on the National Institute Healthcare and Clinical Excellence website. www.NICE.org

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 – Tel: (01323) 417400 Ext: 5860 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

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Other formats

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Tel: 01424 755255 Ext: 2620

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:
Enter names and job titles (at least one from each site if appropriate)
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The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
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