

Rectal ultrasound



Information for patients

Gastrointestinal Physiology



Having a rectal ultrasound

The aims of this leaflet are:

- To inform and involve you in your care
- To explain what happens on the day of the test
- To answer questions you may have about the test

Why have I been sent for this test?

Your consultant has requested that you have an ultrasound test in your rectum (back passage). This will help us to learn more about where your polyp or small growth is, how deep it has reached into the bowel wall and if there are any lymph nodes in the area which may be related to it. (Lymph nodes are small glands that help the body to fight infection).

Some polyps or small growths may be quite near the surface of the bowel wall and can be removed during a colonoscopy (bowel camera test) and others may reach further into the bowel wall. If this is the case you may require surgery and sometimes additional treatment.

Do I have to have any bowel preparation?

As this examination is looking at the rectal wall, it will only involve the lower part of your bowel. It is not necessary to have full bowel preparation, which you may have had prior to your colonoscopy. You can eat and drink normally before your test, and apart from iron tablets, you need not stop any medication, unless your doctor has told you otherwise. You may be given a bisacodyl suppository or you will be given a small enema in the department before your test. This is just to help to get a better view of the bowel wall and to make you feel more comfortable.

Where do I go?

The department is located in the Chesterman building on C Floor (ground level). If you come in via the main entrance, please walk past the café, turn left, walk a few yards down the corridor and the Department of GI Physiology is on the right hand side.

Please ring the bell on the wall and a member of staff will open the door. You will be asked to take a seat in the small waiting room. A member of staff will take you into a private room where someone will discuss the test with you.

You are very welcome to bring someone with you, although they will be asked to stay in the department's waiting room while you have your test.

What will happen when I arrive?

When you arrive, you will have the test explained in full. If you feel that you fully understand the risks of having the test, you will be asked to sign a consent form; as with any procedure we must seek your consent beforehand. Staff will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives, where relevant, before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any part of the test, please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

You will be asked a number of health related questions, including a list of your medication, details of allergies and any medication which thins your blood, which you may be taking.

What happens during the test?

You will be taken into a private room and then asked to remove your lower clothing and underwear. You will lie on a couch on your left side and you will be covered with a sheet. In the room, there will usually be a Doctor and two Clinical Physiologists.

Each member of the team will be there to look after you and answer any questions you may have; you will have a simple rectal examination to feel where the polyp or growth is, then a small tube-like piece of equipment will be gently inserted into your back passage, a small amount of air is used to gently open the bowel and allow a better view of the polyp or growth. When there is a good view of the polyp or growth, the ultrasound probe is inserted into the tube and a small amount of water is used to inflate a balloon on the end of the ultrasound probe.

The balloon allows the ultrasound equipment to get detailed pictures of the bowel wall. During your test you may be asked to move onto your back or onto your right side, to get better pictures of the polyp or growth and surrounding tissue.

Is the test painful?

The test is not painful although you may feel discomfort when air is used to slightly stretch the bowel wall to allow a better view. You will not require sedation and the test should not cause you any discomfort afterwards. We do understand that you may have concerns about having this type of test. However the healthcare team will be there to ensure your privacy and dignity. The team will make every effort to ensure you are as comfortable as possible throughout the test.

What are the risks of having the tests?

As with most tests there may be risks involved and there is a low risk of causing a hole in the bowel wall (perforation) and bleeding. It is very rare that a serious problem arises.

What are the alternatives?

The ultrasound is done as part of a number of tests, all of which help to make your diagnosis. These will include MRI and CT scans. The results of all tests will help the health team to plan the best treatment for you.

What happens after the test?

You will stay in the department for a short while after your test to allow you to have a drink and have time to ask any questions. Following this you will be able to go home. The ultrasound pictures of your bowel will then be looked at and discussed at the hospitals specialist bowel meeting (MDT). This happens once a week. The experts at the meeting will look at your scan pictures and will agree the best treatments for you. Your consultant will then see you in clinic and discuss your treatment plan. If you have not got a clinic appointment then you will usually be contacted within a day or so of the meeting taking place.

Is there anything to look out for when I go home?

Some slight bleeding following your test is not uncommon. However if you consider it to be an emergency you should contact your nearest Accident and Emergency Department as soon as possible.

Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

For further information regarding your test please contact Sarah Kelly in the Department of GI Physiology on:

- **0114 305 2387**

If we cannot answer your question, we will ensure that you are given the contact details of someone who will be able to help.



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