

Patient information factsheet

Having a proctogram examination

We have given you this factsheet because you have been referred for a proctogram examination. It explains what a proctogram is and what will happen at your appointment, so you know what to expect. We hope it will answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

What is a proctogram?

A proctogram is a type of x-ray examination (a procedure that uses radiation to produce images of the inside of the body) that looks at your pelvic floor to see what happens when you empty your bowels and why you may be having problems doing this.

How should I prepare for the procedure?

No special preparation is needed before arriving at the hospital and you can eat and drink as normal on the day.

Allergies

Please contact us as soon as possible if you have had any reactions to iodine or x-ray contrast (a liquid visible on x-rays) in the past.

Pregnancy

If you are pregnant or think there is a chance that you might be pregnant, please contact us before your appointment.

Additional support

Please let us know as soon as you receive your appointment letter if you have problems standing or transferring from a wheelchair so that we can make sure we have the appropriate equipment and support available.

If you have any personal health concerns which you feel may affect your safety in the department, or if you think you may need assistance, please let us know when you arrive.

Clothing and jewellery

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown for this procedure.

We will also ask you to remove any jewellery that may interfere with the x-ray images. As a department, we cannot take responsibility if these items are lost or misplaced, so we advise removing all jewellery at home before your appointment.

What will happen during the procedure?

The procedure will be performed by a radiologist (a doctor who uses x-rays to diagnose illnesses) in the radiology department.

When you arrive, we will take you to the examination room. We will introduce you to the team who will be performing your procedure and explain what will happen during the procedure. This is a good opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have.

We will then ask you to drink a special liquid called barium so that your small bowel is visible on x-rays. After you have drunk the barium, you will need to wait for approximately 60 to 90 minutes to allow it time to reach the end of your small bowel. We will advise you where you can wait during this time.

We will then ask you to change into a hospital gown before taking you back to the examination room.

If you have a vagina, we may ask for your permission to insert some gel mixed with x-ray contrast into your vagina, so that we can clearly see this on the x-ray images.

We will then gently insert a small rubber tube into your rectum (back passage) and fill it with a mixture that contains barium.

We will then ask you to sit on a special chair by the x-ray machine. We will give you some instructions and then ask you to try and empty your bowels while we take some x-ray images. You may feel embarrassed about having to empty your bowels in front of other people. However, try to remember that this is a routine procedure and we want you to feel as relaxed as possible. When we ask you to empty your bowels, we will bring a screen across to make the area you are in more private.

When you have passed all the barium in your back passage, or we have taken enough images, you will be able to get up and get dressed.

Most people do not find the procedure painful, but you may experience some discomfort when we insert the tube into your back passage.

How long will the procedure take?

The procedure will take approximately 15 minutes. However, you should expect to be in the department for at least two hours in total, due to the preparation needed for the procedure.

What will happen after the procedure?

No special care is necessary after the procedure and you can return to your usual daily activities. You should try to drink plenty of fluids.

There is a bathroom and toilet immediately next to the examination room in case you need to pass any more barium. Your bowel motions may be pale in colour for a short period due to the barium.

Are there any risks?

Radiation

During your procedure, we will use x-rays to see inside your body. This procedure cannot be done without x-rays. All x-rays use ionising radiation which increases your risk of cancer, but for this procedure, the risk is very low.

Your doctor has decided that the benefit to you from the procedure outweighs the very low risk from the radiation. We will not expose you to any more radiation than is absolutely necessary.

Pregnancy

This procedure involves the use of ionising radiation (x-rays) which although considered safe for you, may be harmful to an unborn baby. As such, we have a legal obligation to check if there is any chance that you may be pregnant. We have to ask this question to anyone who has the potential to become pregnant, regardless of age or circumstances.

When will I receive the results?

We will not be able to give you any results or feedback on the day of your procedure. We will examine the x-ray images and then send a report of our findings to the doctor who referred you for the procedure.

If you were referred by a doctor at the hospital, this report should be available at your next outpatient appointment.

Further information

Transport

If you are arriving by car, please be advised that our car parks can get very busy, so it's a good idea to allow plenty of time to find a space. You may wish to consider getting a lift or coming by public transport.

If you have a medical condition that means you need help getting to and from the hospital, please contact the patient transport service directly on **0300 123 9833**.

Bringing someone with you

We do not advise bringing children with you to your appointment as they cannot stay with you while you have the procedure and they must not be left unattended at any time.

If you do bring children with you, you will need to arrange for a responsible adult to look after them while you have the procedure. Please note that our staff are not able to supervise your children on your behalf. If this causes any difficulties, please contact us to rearrange your appointment using the details below.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns before or after your procedure, please contact the radiology department using the details below.

Radiology department

Telephone: **023 8120 6079** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

If you are unsure as to why you need this procedure, please speak to the doctor or clinical team who referred you.

Patient information factsheet

Useful links

www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-visitors/southampton-general-hospital/getting-here

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated, or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **PFSH@uhs.nhs.uk**

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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