

You will need to return to have an x-ray taken five days after taking the tablet. You will receive separate instructions for this test from the radiology department.

**If you need a proctogram or transit study, it is very important to tell your nurse specialist if you still have periods, as this may affect when we can do your test. If you do not tell us, we may need to cancel your appointment on the day.**

## What happens after my tests?

A report summarising the results of your investigations will be written during the Pelvic Floor Unit's weekly meeting. This report will then be sent to your referring doctor. A summary letter of the results will also be sent to you.

If you have been sent to us from another hospital, please contact that hospital to arrange an appointment with your consultant.

Depending on the results of your investigations, you may be referred for treatment at or near to your referring hospital, or back at Guy's and St Thomas'.

## Contacting the team

If you have any questions about your appointment, please call the unit secretaries on **020 7188 4191/7893**.

For clinical queries, please call:

**Monica Lyons** (nurse manager) on **020 7188 4192**.

There are three colorectal surgeons in the unit:

- Mr Andrew Williams
- Mr Amir Darakhshan
- Mr Schizas

To contact them, please call their secretary on **020 7188 2576/82569/82576**

## Further information

### Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'

**t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Language Support Services

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

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# Welcome to the Pelvic Floor Unit

**This leaflet explains the services provided by the Pelvic Floor Unit.**

**If you have any questions about the unit, please speak to a member of the team. Contact details are on pages 5–6 of this leaflet.**

The Pelvic Floor Unit is a facility for patients who have problems with their bowels. You may experience the following symptoms:

- constipation
- loose stool (runny or watery poo)
- difficulty passing stool, or
- leakage of stool from your anus (back passage) without your awareness or control (this is also called faecal incontinence).

The movement of your stool is controlled by the muscles in your intestine and the muscles around your anus, called the anal sphincter muscles. If these muscles are not working correctly, you may not be able to control your bowel movements properly.

These problems can affect men and women of all ages, for many different reasons. For example, some women experience problems after childbirth.

Please do not feel embarrassed to talk to us about your problems. We can offer treatment, advice and support for all of these conditions.

The following tests examine the function and structure of your muscles and help us to find the cause of your symptoms. You may have one or more of these tests, depending on your symptoms. All of these tests are done as outpatient investigations, meaning that you will not have to stay in hospital overnight.

You will be able to eat and drink as normal and take your regular medications before

your appointment. Your appointment letter will contain further details about how to get to the unit.

## Ano-rectal manometry

This is a test to check whether the muscles of your bottom and anus are working properly. You will need to lie on your left side, while a small tube with water running through it (about the size of a pen) is inserted into your anus. This measures the pressures in your anus when your muscles are at rest and when you squeeze them. A small balloon is then inserted into your bottom to check sensation. The whole procedure takes around 10 minutes.

## Endo-anal ultrasound

Ultrasound uses inaudible sound waves to show the structure of your anal sphincter muscles to see if there is any damage. We will ask you to lie on your front and will insert a small ultrasound probe, about the size of a finger, inside your anus. The images produced are recorded. This takes about 10 minutes.

## Perineal and vaginal ultrasound

These are used to get an overview of the pelvic floor and to see surface and deep pelvic structures in more detail. We will ask you to drink two glasses of water to fill up the bladder before the scans. We will then ask you to lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the table. You will be covered at all times.

For the vaginal scan, a small probe about the size of your finger will be inserted into the vagina. The images are recorded. This should take about 15 minutes.

For the perineal scan, a flat probe will be placed on your perineum (undercarriage). The images are recorded. This should take about 10 minutes.

## Proctogram

This is an x-ray test to examine how your bowel is working. You will be given a drink containing barium, which allows your bowel to show up on x-ray. Barium is a thick, chalky substance that takes about 30 minutes to reach your small intestine. We will also insert some barium paste into your rectum. We will then ask you to sit on a special toilet chair in privacy and squeeze the barium out/empty your bowel while we take x-rays. This will take about 10 minutes.

**None of these tests are painful and they are no more uncomfortable than being internally examined by your doctor. You will be told exactly what is going to be done and what to expect as the tests are being performed.**

## Transit study

This is a special x-ray that looks at how quickly stool passes through your bowel. You will be sent a tablet that contains small shapes, which will travel through your bowel.