

Having an MR proctogram

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having an MR proctogram. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives, as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is an MR proctogram?

It is a study which involves the use of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to assess the function of your pelvic floor. The examination looks at the way the rectum empties and how the muscles of the pelvis and bladder move when you pass faeces (open your bowels).

MRI uses a powerful magnet to scan 3D images of your body to help diagnose your health condition. There is no use of radiation or X-rays. The MRI makes a loud knocking sound which is normal; you will be given headphones to help reduce the noise and to hear the instructions. The MRI scanner is a tube open at both ends. You can be seen at all times by the radiographer.

Why should I have an MR proctogram?

Your doctor has referred you for this examination to help make a diagnosis or to help with your treatment plans. You may need an MR proctogram to find out more about what is causing your symptoms, such as problems in opening your bowels or emptying your bladder.

Preparation for your MR proctogram

You can eat and drink as normal. If you are taking any medication, please continue to take this. You will be asked to arrive 45 minutes before your scan. During this time you will do the following.

- Complete an MRI safety questionnaire.
- Have the procedure explained to you and an opportunity to ask questions.
- Remove all your clothes and metal objects, lock away valuables in a locker and change into a hospital gown.
- 30 minutes before your scan you will be given a small fleet (sodium phosphate) enema. This involves a nurse putting 100ml of fluid into your bottom or you may choose to do it yourself. The fleet will cleanse the lower part of your bowel. This may be uncomfortable but should not be painful.
- After the enema is administered you will need to lie on your side and wait for a minimum of 10 minutes (if possible, this time is a guideline as each patient is different) before going to the toilet.
- You may need to use the toilet several times before your scan begins.

During the MR proctogram

Once the rectum is empty you will be taken into the scan room, you will be asked to lie on the table on your side. Three tubes of rectal jelly will be inserted into your rectum one at a time. You will need to hold the jelly in until given instructions.

You will then be asked to lie on your back, feet towards the scanner, flat on the table, with your knees bent. If you are not comfortable please tell the radiographer. Your body will then be placed feet first within the scanner so that pictures of your pelvis can be obtained.

You will be given instructions to push out the jelly, like when you are opening your bowels. This may be repeated several times. If the jelly is not expelled, you will be asked to go to the toilet to expel the jelly and return to the scanner for more imaging.

This may sound rather unpleasant but actually it isn't since the lower part of your bowel has been cleaned you are only passing clean jelly.

The scan will last around 10 to 20 minutes, depending on if you need the toilet and further scanning.

After the MR proctogram

At the end of the scan you may change and leave when you are ready. The pictures taken during the scan are carefully studied by the radiologist who will produce a detailed report.

What are the risks?

MRI is a very safe procedure for most patients and involves no ionising radiation. National Safety Guidelines recommend that we do not scan pregnant women unless the scan is clinically urgent. The doctor who refers you for the scan, along with the radiologist (doctor who uses x-ray to diagnose illnesses) will decide whether they believe your scan is necessary.

Many pregnant women have had MRI scans both at Guy's and St Thomas' and at other MRI centres worldwide, with no reported problems. If you have been referred for an MRI scan when you are pregnant and would like further information, please do not hesitate to call us (our contact details are at the end of this leaflet).

Patients with heart pacemakers and certain other surgical implants, for example a cochlear implant, cannot be scanned. You will be asked to complete and sign a safety questionnaire before your scan to make sure it is safe for you to be scanned.

The most common side effect from the fleet enema is diarrhoea. Very rarely (less than one out of 10,000) patients report abdominal pain, bloating, nausea, vomiting, anal itching, blistering or dehydration. If these symptoms persist please contact your GP or local Emergency Department.

Are there any alternatives?

A conventional defecating proctogram could be performed instead. This is carried out in the fluoroscopy unit. This involves giving rectal contrast (barium is used instead of rectal jelly) and the use of X-ray imaging. The barium coats the stool and shows up on the X-rays so that images can be obtained whilst you are emptying your bowels. It gives more limited information regarding the function of your pelvic floor compared to an MR proctogram.

Giving my consent (permission)

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Will I feel any pain?

It is unlikely that you will feel any pain during insertion of the rectal gel or during the MRI scan. Discomfort in the stomach has been reported very rarely (less than one in 10,000 people) with use of fleet enema. If you are concerned please tell the radiographer/nurse at the time of the examination.

What do I need to do after I go home?

You may eat and drink as normal following your scan.

What should I do if I have a problem?

If you feel unwell following the examination or have any concerns please contact your GP or the MRI department (our contact details are below).

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

The pictures taken during the examination are carefully studied by the radiologist, who will produce a detailed report. The results will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the test. They will discuss the results with you and any treatment you may need.

You should already have an appointment with the team who referred you. If not please contact them to arrange one to discuss the results of this test.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about having an MR proctogram, please contact the MRI department on 020 7188 5542 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Please visit the MRI section on our website for more information:
www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/our-services/radiology/types/mri.aspx

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

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

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership