

Having an MRI proctogram

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having an MRI proctogram. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives, as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have any more questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is an MRI proctogram?

It is a study which uses 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 open your bowels have a poo.

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 do you need an MRI proctogram?

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

Preparation for your MRI 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 given you will need to lie on your side and wait for at least 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 MRI 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. 180ml (just over half a soft drink can) of rectal jelly will be inserted into your rectum. 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 it isn't as the lower part of your bowel has been cleaned so you are only passing clean jelly.

The scan will take 10-20 minutes, depending on if you need the toilet and more scanning.

After the MRI proctogram

After the scan you may change and leave when you are ready. The pictures taken during the scan are studied by the radiologist who will produce a detailed report for your doctor.

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 (X-ray specialist) will decide whether they believe your scan is necessary.

Many pregnant women have had MRI scans with no reported problems. If you have been referred for an MRI scan when you are pregnant and would like further information, please call us (contact details at the end of this leaflet).

Patients with pacemakers or some 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 1 out of 10,000) patients report abdominal pain, bloating, nausea (feeling sick), vomiting (being sick), anal itching, blistering or dehydration. If these symptoms persist, contact your GP or local Emergency Department (A&E).

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 instead of jelly) and X-rays. The barium coats the stool and shows up on the X-rays so that images can be obtained while you are emptying your bowels. It gives less information regarding the function of your pelvic floor compared to an MRI proctogram.

Giving – asking for your 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 1 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 after your scan.

What should I do if I have a problem?

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

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

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 you do 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 MRI proctogram, please contact the MRI department on 020 7188 5542, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

Please visit the MRI section on our website for more information,

w: 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 **w:** 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, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

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

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