

Defaecating Proctogram/ Defaecogram

This is an x-ray examination of the rectum, the lower 10 - 15 cm of your large bowel and the way the muscles around this area work. You may be referred for this procedure if you are having problems with constipation, incontinence or other pelvic floor issues. Pelvic floor muscles are the layer of muscles that support the pelvic organs and span the bottom of the pelvis. The pelvic organs are the bladder and bowel in men, and the bladder, bowel and uterus in women. The procedure is not painful however we do understand that it is embarrassing to evacuate your bowels with others present. Because of this we do everything that we can to ensure that you feel as comfortable as possible.

How do I prepare for this procedure?

- It is important that your rectum is empty when we perform this test
- You will need to obtain a MICROLAX enema kit from the chemist. Follow the included instructions and perform at home on the morning of your test. This will clear your rectum and lower colon of faeces before the test begins. You will need to arrive one hour before your appointment time.

What happens during the procedure?

- To maximise the diagnostic benefit of this test, we will need to use two types of contrast for men and three for women.
- Firstly we will get you to drink approximately 500mL of liquid barium in the hour before your examination – this will highlight the small intestine on the images.
- You will then be asked to change out of your own clothing into a hospital gown with your underwear removed.
- When you have changed the technician will take you into the X-ray room where they will explain the procedure and give you the opportunity to ask any further questions you may have.

- Once you are on the X-ray table a small tube will be inserted into your back passage to allow a small quantity of thick barium paste (x-ray dye) to fill the rectum; this paste has the consistency of mashed potato.
- When enough barium is in your rectum the tube will be removed.
- For women undergoing this examination it may be necessary to insert a small amount of contrast gel into your vagina using a syringe. This will help identify the structures in your pelvic region.
- During the test you will be seated on a commode (mobile toilet chair) between the X-ray tube and detector. Due to the sensitive nature of this test every effort is made to protect your privacy. The examination is carried out by professional technical staff that are highly skilled and experienced in this area. Once your position has been fine-tuned by the technician you will be asked to perform a series of pelvic floor exercises whilst live x-ray images are taken. During the examination you will be asked to empty your bowels and we will take live x-ray images of this. This will allow the radiologist to see the interactions of the pelvic organs.

What happens after the procedure?

- You will return to the change room where you may use the toilet. There may still be a small amount of Barium remaining in your rectum and this should pass normally into the toilet along with the vaginal contrast you were given. This space is available for your use as long as required, please take your time and ensure that you feel ready to leave.
- In the first 48 hours following the procedure we ask you to drink plenty of water as the barium that you drink can cause minor constipation in some people. Also to note is that the barium goes in white and comes out white as well so do not be concerned about this.
- The images will be available online for your specialist and GP to review. The report will be available within 48 hours of your examination.
- If you have any concerns following the procedure please contact your referring Physician.

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