

**Urogynaecology Unit
Department of Gynaecology
The Royal Victoria Infirmary**

Bladder Function Tests

Please read through this information booklet before your appointment for bladder function tests. This will give time to discuss your own individual questions in the clinic.

Bladder Function Tests

We have made an appointment for you to have some tests carried out on your bladder. These may have been described as 'urodynamics', 'cystometry' or 'bladder function tests' when they were mentioned at your last outpatient appointment. You may feel quite anxious about the prospect of the investigations. There is nothing complicated, dangerous or painful about them. They may be slightly embarrassing and the following information is intended to ease some of your worries. The test itself may take up to one hour to complete.

Please try not to be embarrassed about the possibility of leakage during the tests. In fact, if leakage is a significant problem for you, it is important that we can demonstrate this, and to see/record your bladder activity at the time, to best decide the cause and treatment for your problems.

Why carry out these tests?

The tests are designed to investigate the way your bladder and urethra (bladder outlet) respond while being filled, and how efficiently they empty during urination. This tells us a lot about how your bladder behaves normally, and how it misbehaves to produce the symptoms you describe. There are many different reasons why urinary problems and leakage may occur and many different forms of treatment available. The most appropriate treatment for you can be decided with the information provided by these tests.

How are the tests carried out?

You will be able to change into a gown in the en suite facility attached to each investigation room. At the start of the test you will be asked to empty your bladder on a special commode (in private), which measures how much and how quickly you pass urine. You will be asked to sit/lie on a couch and we may then scan your bladder to see how well your bladder empties. After this the doctor or nurse carrying out the test will clean the genital area with sterile water and a small amount of anaesthetic gel will be instilled into the bladder outlet. A fine tube or catheter is then passed into the bladder. This may be a little uncomfortable but should not be painful. The tube is used to fill your bladder again and to measure the pressure. Another fine tube is passed into the vagina (front passage), or the rectum (back passage) to give a comparison.

Saline (salty water) is run slowly into the bladder. This may feel slightly cold at first. The nurse or doctor will ask you to cough regularly and ask you to

describe how your bladder feels as it is filling. When you feel full you will be asked to stand, cough, do some gentle exercise and asked to listen to running water to reproduce your symptoms.

You will then be asked to pass water again this time with the pressure tubes in place so we can measure the bladder muscle action. The tubes are then removed and the tests completed. In certain circumstances we may wish to carry out one or two further tests which will be discussed with you if they are necessary in your case.

Who carries out the tests?

The tests are carried out by the nurse consultant/ practitioner or doctor in quiet, informal and private surroundings. Explanations will be given at every stage of the tests.

Preparing for the tests

- You should try to arrive for the tests with a comfortably full bladder. However do not drink excessively beforehand and do not hold on so long that you become uncomfortable.
- Please ensure that any medication for your bladder symptoms, for example Oxybutinin (Ditropan), Tolterodine (Detrusitol), Solifenacin (Vesicare) or Trospium (Regurin) is stopped a week before your test appointment.
- Please bring a fresh urine sample so that we can ensure that there is no infection before we start the tests.

What happens after the tests?

Following the tests you should usually feel no after effects. You may feel some slight discomfort when passing urine on the first few occasions after completing the tests. You may see specks of blood in the urine after the test.

Ensure that you drink plenty of fluids during the first 24 hours and this should settle quickly. If you still have some discomfort after this time or if you feel unwell with a temperature you should take a sample of urine to your G.P. to ensure that there is no infection. Although every precaution is taken to prevent infection, there is a small (2-10% that is 2-10 out of 100) risk of introducing infection at the time of the tests.

Results

The results will be explained to you at the time and if possible our suggestions for your treatment will also be discussed. A letter detailing your results is then sent to your GP or Consultant (whoever referred you for the tests). If there are any further questions about your treatment we would be happy to try and answer them, but they are sometimes best discussed with your GP or referring Consultant

Contact details

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Date: April 2013
Review date: April 2015