

# ANORECTAL PHYSIOLOGY STUDIES

## What is the test for ?

Anorectal physiology studies are conducted to assess the function of the sphincter muscle that controls faecal continence and the mechanism of the rectum which acts as a reservoir before pushing out the faeces during evacuation. There are many reasons why your doctor may have requested anorectal physiology. It is a useful study for problems of constipation and faecal incontinence.

## How do I prepare for the test ?

So that the test can be conducted as cleanly as possible you will be advised to have a glycerine suppository on the morning of the investigation. This helps to make sure that the rectum is completely empty before you arrive for the test. Do not worry if you do not pass a bowel motion as the rectum is sometimes already empty. You can eat and drink normally before the test.

## How is the study is conducted ?

This study is performed as a walk in day case procedure. During the study you will be lying on your side facing away from the consultant and nurse. You are partially covered with a blanket and exposure is kept to a minimum. The investigation requires that a small probe is passed through the anus. This probe is only a couple of mm wide and its insertion is completely painless. The study will take about half an hour and during this time you will be asked to perform various exercises including tightening your bottom as much as you can, straining and coughing. The study also assesses rectal sensation. This is done by inflating a small balloon within the rectum until a sensation of fullness within the rectum develops. Finally peri-anal sensation and nerve function can be studied using a finger tip electrical probe. At the conclusion of the study the probe is removed and an immediate return to normal activity is possible.

## The report

After the study is completed it will be analysed by Mr Jourdan and the report will be sent to your requesting doctor within a couple of days.