



**The Leeds  
Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Trust

# Having a proctogram

Information for patients



**Leeds**  
Radiology

## **What is a proctogram?**

A proctogram is an x-ray examination to demonstrate your rectum and anus, these are the last parts of your large bowel.

To look at these areas effectively we need to give you a drink of some x-ray dye called barium. This helps us to see other parts of the bowel as well as the rectum and anus during your examination. We then wait 45-60 minutes to allow the dye to pass through your system.

After 45-60 minutes you will be asked to lie on your side and a small tube will be placed into your back passage. A white paste (barium) will be passed through the tube into your rectum. The tube is then removed and you will be asked to sit on a porta-loo, within the privacy of the x-ray machine. X-rays will be taken as you pass the paste.

## **Who performs the test?**

A specialist radiographer will perform the procedure with an assistant. If you would like a member of staff of the same sex as you to act as a chaperone, please contact the department as soon as possible before your appointment.

## **How do I prepare for the test?**

Do not stop taking vital medicines (heart drugs, steroids, diuretics / water tablets etc.) You may eat and drink as normal prior to the test.

## What should I bring with me?

You will be required to change into a gown for this examination. We will provide you with a gown, but you may wish to bring your own dressing gown. Please do not bring large sums of money or items of value with you. Unfortunately we are unable to provide any childcare so please make alternative arrangements if necessary.

## How long will I be in the department?

Allow two hours for your examination.

## Are there any side-effects?

### *Radiation*

This procedure involves x-rays. Female patients who are, or might be pregnant **must** inform a member of staff in advance.

The amount of radiation used is more than an ordinary x-ray of the chest or body and is equal to the natural radiation we receive from the atmosphere over a period of approximately two years. The risk from this radiation dose is very low.

### *Allergic reaction*

Some patients may be allergic to the x-ray dye or medicines we give you. This is very rare. If you have any allergies please tell the member of staff who is performing your examination, at the start of the examination.

## Do you ever fail to complete the examination?

This is a safe examination that is usually successful. If, for any reason, we are unable to perform the examination we will inform your doctor who will discuss the alternatives with you.

Despite these small risks your doctor believes it is beneficial for you to have this examination. Do bear in mind that there are greater risks from missing a serious disorder by not having the examination.

## How will I feel following the test?

You will be able to eat and drink and resume normal activities immediately. The barium can have a constipating effect so you are advised to drink plenty of fluids over the following few days to keep you hydrated.

## How will I get my results?

You will not be given your results on the day. The results will be sent to your GP (if they referred you for the test. If so you must make an appointment to see them). If you have been referred by a hospital consultant / specialist then you will be sent an appointment to attend the relevant clinic or contacted by letter with the results.



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