

Having an MR Defaecating Proctogram (MRDP)

Information for Patients

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Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having MR Defaecating Proctogram, a test to look at the way the lower bowel (rectum) empties and how the muscles of the pelvic floor and bladder move when you strain or pass faeces. It explains how the test is done, what to expect, and what the possible risks are.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is an MR Defaecating Proctogram (MRDP)?

An MR Defaecating Proctogram uses an MRI scanner to look at the way the lowest part of your bowel (rectum) empties and how the muscles of the pelvic floor and bladder move when you strain or pass faeces.

An MRI scanner is a short tunnel that is open at both ends. It uses a powerful magnet, radiowaves and a computer to produce images of the internal structures of the body. MRI does not use ionizing radiation (x-rays). The scanner is operated by a Radiographer, who is a professional trained to carry out X-rays and other imaging procedures. The pictures are displayed on a computer workstation for examination by the Radiologist, who is a doctor specially trained to interpret the images and carry out more complex imaging examinations



MRI scans provide good detail of internal organs, blood vessels and soft tissues so are often the preferred method of diagnosing and assessing a wide range of medical conditions such as cancers, infection, inflammation, cardiovascular disease, trauma and musculoskeletal disorders. For MRDP, repeated MR images can show how the bowel and muscles move during straining to empty the rectum.

Why do I need an MRDP?

Your doctor may have referred you for an MRDP because you are experiencing problems passing faeces. Either you may find it difficult and feel constipated, or perhaps you still feel there is more to come when you have finished and have trouble controlling yourself.

Sometimes this examination is also performed for other reasons, including because your doctor suspects you may have a “prolapse” or because you are suffering from urinary incontinence.

Most of these problems are related to damage of the muscles in the pelvis, usually during childbirth, although they are sometimes related to inflammation or previous operations in this area.

An MRDP is performed so that your doctor can visualise what is happening in your pelvis when you strain, to help them decide what the best treatment plan is for you, which can range from pelvic floor exercises to an operation.

What do I need to do before my scan?

Diet and Medications

There are no restrictions to your diet prior to this procedure. You should continue to take all your normal medication.

Females

Females are asked to contact the Radiology department if you suspect that you may be pregnant. There is no evidence that MRI is unsafe in pregnancy, but as a precaution, we do not perform MRI on pregnant ladies unless it is essential.

MRI Safety Questionnaire

The magnetic field used for MRI scans is very strong and can affect metal or electronic implants. Please take time to read through and complete the attached MRI Safety questionnaire, which asks about any metal implants, such as artificial joints and stents, or electronic devices, such as a pacemaker, that you may have inside you. If all of the answers are 'no', then please bring the completed questionnaire to your appointment. If, however there are answers that are 'yes', then please return the completed questionnaire immediately to the Radiology department or telephone the MRI appointments desk for advice.

Where do I go when I arrive at the hospital?

Please report to the reception desk in the Radiology department (B8) in good time with your appointment letter. Please click on the following link for a site map of the hospital:

http://www.ruh.nhs.uk/finding/documents/RUH_directory_map.pdf

You will be asked to sit in the waiting area until called by a member of staff. A member of the team will explain the test, go through the MRI safety questionnaire with you, and answer any questions.

You will be shown to a private cubicle and asked to change into a clean gown. Please do not wear items of jewellery, as they will need to be removed prior to the scan. Your clothes and valuables will be secured in a locker until after the procedure.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

You may bring a relative or friend with you to the appointment but, for reasons of safety, they will not be able to accompany you into the examination room, except in very special circumstances.

If you need an interpreter please tell us when you receive your appointment so that we can arrange this.

What happens before the procedure?

You will first be taken to a private room within the radiology department where a member of the team will insert a phosphate enema into your rectum. This involves you lying on your side whilst a cupful of clear liquid is injected into the rectum. This will make you want to defecate and you will be sat close to a toilet. The enema is given to cleanse your rectum prior to the procedure.

What happens during the procedure?

After approximately 20 minutes, the rectum will be empty and you will enter the MRI scanner, which contains a powerful magnet. You will be asked to lie down on the scanner bed on top of absorbent paper sheets. A member of the team will fill your rectum with a clear, clean, lubricant jelly. The scanner table will then move into the MRI scanner. The first scan commences with you lying still within the MRI scanner. You will be asked to perform a squeeze maneuver, as if you are trying to stop yourself from urinating, while a second scan is performed. You will then be asked to empty your bowel on to the absorbent paper whilst we continue to scan your pelvis. Don't worry about getting yourself or the scanner dirty. Your rectum has been cleansed by the enema prior to the test so that when you empty your bowel on the scanner table, you will only be passing clean jelly. The scan finishes by asking you to strain once again whilst we perform the final scan.

At certain times during the procedure, the MRI scanner will make a loud knocking noise caused by the magnets in the machine being turned on and off. You may be given earplugs or headphones to wear. You are welcome to bring your own music CD with you to listen to through the headphones during the scan.

The MRI scan takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. You will be alone in the MRI room during the scan but the Radiographer will be able to see, hear and speak with you at all times.

What happens after the test?

At the end of the examination you will be shown to an area, where you may wash and get changed in privacy.

You may drive yourself home, eat and drink as normal and return to your normal daily activities.

Are there any risks?

MRDP is generally regarded as a very safe test. There is no known adverse effect of the magnetic field and radio waves used in MRI on living tissues.

A small proportion of people (2 – 5 %) find MRI examinations difficult because of the partly enclosed nature of the scanner, causing claustrophobia. Occasionally, mild sedation (relaxing tablets) may help to reduce the anxiety about being in a confined space. If you feel you will need a sedative please discuss this with your GP to obtain the prescription before your scan. If you have had a sedative for the procedure you are advised not to drive, travel alone or return to work for the rest of the day. You should arrange for someone to accompany you home after the test.

Despite these slight risks, your doctor believes it is advisable that you should have this examination, and do bear in mind there are greater risks from missing a serious disorder by not having your scan.

How do I get my results?

A specialist Consultant Radiologist will review the images from your MRDP and send a report to the Consultant who referred you for the scan. The referring Consultant will make an appointment with you to discuss the scan results.

Any questions?

We will do our best to make your visit as comfortable and stress free as possible. If you have any questions, or suggestions for us, please contact MRI appointments on 01225 824072.

More information

For general information about Radiology departments, visit The Royal College of Radiologists' website: <https://www.rcr.ac.uk/public-and-media/what-expect-when>

How do I make a comment about my examination?

If you have any concerns or suggestions following your examination, please contact the [Patient Advice and Liaison Service \(PALS\)](#),
Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust, Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG.
Email: ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net
Tel: 01225 821655 or 01225 826319