Urodynamics

Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered
Urodynamic tests

The word ‘urodynamics’ covers a range of tests, which are performed to investigate bladder function. All the tests are listed here, but your Health Care Team and your appointment letter will say which is the most appropriate test for your care. Information on how to prepare for your test and what to expect both during and afterwards is given in this leaflet.

You do not have to have the test but it will help the doctor in diagnosing the best treatment for your symptoms. There are currently no alternatives available which will give us the information provided by this test.
Are there any risks associated with these tests?

**Flow studies**

No, there are no risks associated with flow studies.

**Standard Urodynamics, Video Urodynamics, and Ambulatory Studies**

About 5 people in every 100 who have these tests develop a urinary infection afterwards. This can cause burning/stinging when you pass urine and may also make your urine smell or look cloudy. It is, however, quite common to experience slight stinging or burning on passing urine the first few times after your test. You may also find you pass urine more than usual. This is quite common and nothing to worry about and this should settle in the first 12 – 24 hours after the test. Drinking more may help this. Occasionally some people also see a small amount of blood in their urine after the test. This will also settle down, so do not be alarmed.

If these symptoms persist you may have developed a urinary infection and you should see your GP urgently for a prescription of antibiotics.

**After these tests**

A report will be sent to your consultant and/or to your GP.
Flow studies

You should allow 2 to 3 hours for the test. Please eat and drink normally before you come for your test. If possible please arrive with a comfortably full bladder.

What the test involves

On arrival at the clinic, the flows nurse will meet you and fully explain the test to you. You will be asked to drink some water to fill your bladder. The flows nurse will discuss how much with you.

After drinking some water, you will need to wait until your bladder feels full. We will then ask you to pass water (urine), in privacy, into a specially adapted toilet (flowmeter) that will measure how quickly you pass urine. Once you have been to the toilet you will have an ultrasound scan of your bladder to see how empty it is. (The scan is performed by placing some warm gel on the skin over your bladder area and moving an ultrasound probe over the skin.)

This process will normally be repeated 2 or 3 times, which is why this test takes a long time.
Standard Urodynamics

You should allow one and a half hours for the test. Please let us know if you are currently taking any tablets for your bladder (e.g. Vesicare, Regurin, Detrusitol, Oxybutynin) as you may be asked to stop these a week before your appointment. If you feel you have a urine infection, you should inform the hospital when you receive your appointment so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

What the test involves

Before the Test

No special preparations are needed. You can eat and drink as normal, but we would like you to come with your bladder comfortably full. After you arrive, the doctor/nurse performing the test will explain the test to you and ask some questions about the symptoms that you have been experiencing. Please complete the Frequency / Volume Chart (bladder diary) sent with your appointment letter. It is important that you bring it with you to the clinic.

The doctor/nurse will then leave you alone to pass urine into a flowmeter. This measures how fast the urine flows from you. After you have done this, the doctor will examine you. This will include a brief internal examination.

The Test

This involves passing a small tube into your bladder and another small tube is placed in your rectum (back passage). These tubes allow us to take pressure measurements. Your bladder will be slowly filled with fluid through the tube until you feel full. You will be asked to cough several times during the test.

The tubes will then be removed and you may pass urine. During the test a doctor and a nurse or technician will be with you. They will answer your questions and tell you the results of the test.
Video Urodynamics

This is similar to standard urodynamics however instead of using saline (salt water) to fill your bladder, we use an iodine-based fluid and involves taking pictures with an X-ray machine. You should inform us if there is any possibility that you are pregnant (if you are female) as we would be unable to perform the test if you were.

What the test involves

Before the Test

No special preparations are needed. You can eat and drink as normal, but we would like you to come with your bladder comfortably full. After you arrive, the doctor/nurse performing the test will explain the test to you and ask some questions about the symptoms that you have been experiencing. Please complete the Frequency / Volume Chart (bladder diary) sent with your appointment letter. It is important that you bring it with you to the clinic.

The doctor/nurse will then leave you alone to pass urine into a flowmeter. This measures how fast the urine flows from you. After you have done this, the doctor will examine you. This will include a brief internal examination.

The Test

This involves passing a small tube into your bladder and another small tube is placed in your rectum (back passage). These tubes allow us to take pressure measurements. Your bladder will be slowly filled with fluid, which contains iodine, through the tube until you feel full. You will be asked to cough several times during the test.

The tubes will then be removed and you may pass urine. During the test a doctor and a nurse or technician will be with you. They will answer your questions and tell you the results of the test. X-rays are taken during the test to show how the bladder is
Please inform us if you are allergic to iodine as the filling medium contains iodine.
Ambulatory Studies

You should allow three to four hours for the test.

What the test involves

Before the Test

No special preparations are needed. You can eat and drink as normal, but we would like you to come with your bladder comfortably full. After you arrive, the doctor/nurse performing the test will explain the test to you and ask some questions about the symptoms that you have been experiencing. Please complete the Frequency / Volume Chart (bladder diary) sent with your appointment letter. It is important that you bring it with you to the clinic.

The doctor/nurse will then leave you alone to pass urine into a flowmeter. This measures how fast the urine flows from you. After you have done this, the doctor will examine you. This will include a brief internal examination.

The Test

This involves passing a small tube into your bladder and another small tube is placed in your rectum (back passage). These tubes allow us to take continuous pressure measurements whilst your bladder is filling naturally. These tubes are connected to a small recording device, which is worn discreetly on a belt around your waist for the duration of the test. Your bladder function will be monitored whilst you are walking, exercising and relaxing. You can drink normally during the test.

During the test a doctor and a nurse, or technician, will be available to you. They will answer your questions. It is best to wear loose fitting separate clothes such as a skirt, or trousers, and a top. Please bring a book or paper to read whilst the test is taking place. You will also be allowed to leave the department once the test has started so you can walk around,
or exercise, to help you reproduce your symptoms. You will need to stay within the boundaries of the hospital grounds. When you need to pass urine there will be a specially assigned toilet for you to use, but you will need to let the nurse know when you need to empty your bladder. The portable recording device that you wear will be checked before and after you pass urine.

Please let us know if you suffer from frequent urinary tract infections (or cystitis) as the test cannot be done if you have any signs of infection. The test can also not be done if your menstrual period (if you are female) is due on the test date, as we are unable to accurately record urine leakage at the time of menstruation during this test.
References and sources of additional information


International Continence Society http://www.icsoffice.org/


Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) 2010. Information for patients having an intravenous pyelogram (IVP) or an intravenous urogram (IVU). “http://www.rcr.ac.uk” www.rcr.ac.uk


United Kingdom Continence Society http://www.ukcs.uk.net/

The following web sites are useful patient resources for additional information, help and advice:

Bladder and Bowel Foundation http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org/

Bristol Urological Institute http://www.bui.ac.uk

Continence Foundation http://www.continence-foundation.org.uk/
References and Further Information

NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk] [Last accessed November 2012]

NHS Constitution. Information on your rights and responsibilities. Available at [www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution]
If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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