

Proctogram examination



Radiology Department

You have been referred by your doctor for a Proctogram examination as you may have been experiencing some difficulties in opening your bowels. This x-ray examination enables us to see the structures in your lower abdomen and rectum. The purpose of the test is to see how these structures function during emptying of the rectum. Although this sounds an embarrassing examination, we assure you that we endeavour to protect your dignity and privacy as much as possible.

The Radiology Department

The radiology department may also be known as the x-ray or diagnostic imaging department. It is the facility in the hospital where radiological examinations of patients are carried out, using a range of equipment.

Who does what?

Appointment clerks will help you make, or change appointments

Radiographers will perform the test. They will be able to answer some of your questions but will not be able to give you the results of your test. They ensure the images taken are of diagnostic quality for a radiologist to report on.

Radiologists are specialist doctors trained to interpret x-rays and images and will report your examination. These results will be sent to the doctor/consultant who referred you for this test.

What preparation is required?

There is no preparation or special dietary requirements needed prior to the examination, although you may feel more comfortable if you empty your bladder and bowel before leaving home. Please allow approximately an hour for this examination.

Can I bring a relative or a friend?

Yes, as there is a period of waiting during the examination it would be nice to have company, however, for reasons of safety; they will not be able to accompany you in the x-ray room, except in very special circumstances.

When you arrive

Please register at the reception desk, where you will be directed to the waiting area. A radiographer will then prepare a barium drink for you. Barium is an x-ray dye. We are using the drink to outline your small intestine for the x-ray. This barium drink takes 30 to 40 minutes to reach the small intestine. For this period of time you do not have to sit in the waiting area and may go for a walk for 20-25 minutes. Please do not drink any other beverages during this time.

You will be shown to a private cubicle where you will be asked to change into a hospital gown. You will be asked to place your clothes and personal items in a basket, which you will keep with you.

What will happen during the examination?

You will be taken into a private examination room where you will be asked to lie on a couch on your left hand side. A specialist doctor or senior radiographer will then gently insert a soft tube into your back passage; having obtained your verbal consent to do so. Through this tube we will then introduce a thicker barium paste (similar in consistency to toothpaste) in order to outline your rectum.

You will then be taken through to the adjacent x-ray room where you will be asked to sit on a specially adapted commode (like a toilet) on the x-ray machine. From this stage of the examination the staff will disappear behind a modesty curtain and, therefore, we cannot see you and you cannot see us!

Once you feel comfortable, a series of 3 sets of x-ray images will be taken, firstly with you sitting at rest, then we will ask you to strain without opening your bowels if possible, (do not worry if this will not be possible the examination will still be successful). Finally, we will ask you to empty your bowels of the barium paste.

We fully appreciate that this procedure requires privacy and we will make every effort to make you feel relaxed and comfortable.

Will the examination be painful?

The Proctogram should cause very little discomfort.

Is there an alternative examination?

We do not currently offer an alternative examination at this hospital.

Side effects and what happens after the examination?

The barium you drank will pass through your digestive system. As it passes through it can become thicker due to the gut absorbing the water content. It is advised to drink more fluids than normal to reduce the risk of constipation, if you suffer from constipation it may help to take your normal laxative preparation. The barium will also be apparent in your stools; they will appear whitish for a day or so.

It may be necessary to flush the toilet several times because barium is quite heavy. It is important to clear the pan otherwise if it sets you could potentially be looking at it for years!

- Eating a high fibre diet like bran or wholemeal bread can help but the main thing is to drink plenty of fluids.
- If you have problems with your heart or water retention, you may not be able to drink this much safely. If in doubt or you find you become breathless or your legs swell up, contact your GP.

When and how will I know the result of the examination?

The images of your bowel will be examined by the radiologist, who will then send a report of the results to the person who referred you.

The result will be sent out to the doctor/consultant from the outpatient department who referred you and will be there in time for your next outpatient appointment. If you do not yet have another outpatient appointment and do not hear anything within two weeks, you should telephone the consultant's secretary for advice.

Women of child bearing age

This examination is not advisable for pregnant women, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please advise the x-ray department in advance if you think you are or might be pregnant.

Privacy and dignity

Sometimes tests, although necessary, can be embarrassing or undignified for patients but we promise to do everything we can to make you as comfortable as possible during your visit to the department. We hope that the information in this leaflet will answer any questions you may have but please feel free to contact us if you have any particular worries, questions or concerns.

Patient surveys

We value your opinion on our service and in order to deliver, maintain and improve this service we ask you to complete a short patient questionnaire survey found with your appointment letter.

Completion of these surveys is entirely voluntary.

Questions and contacts

Following the examination, if you experience any problems please contact the department between 08:30 and 17:00 Monday to Friday. Outside these times please contact your GP.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about this procedure, please telephone the Radiology Department.

Telephone: 01483 464150

If you are unable to keep your appointment notify the Radiology department as soon as possible.

For further information about Diagnostic Imaging Services at Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, please contact:

Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Egerton Road

Guildford

Surrey

GU2 7XX

www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk

Further information and key reference sources

Radiation Dose

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-dose-comparisons/ionising-radiation-dose-comparisons>





More information about Proctograms

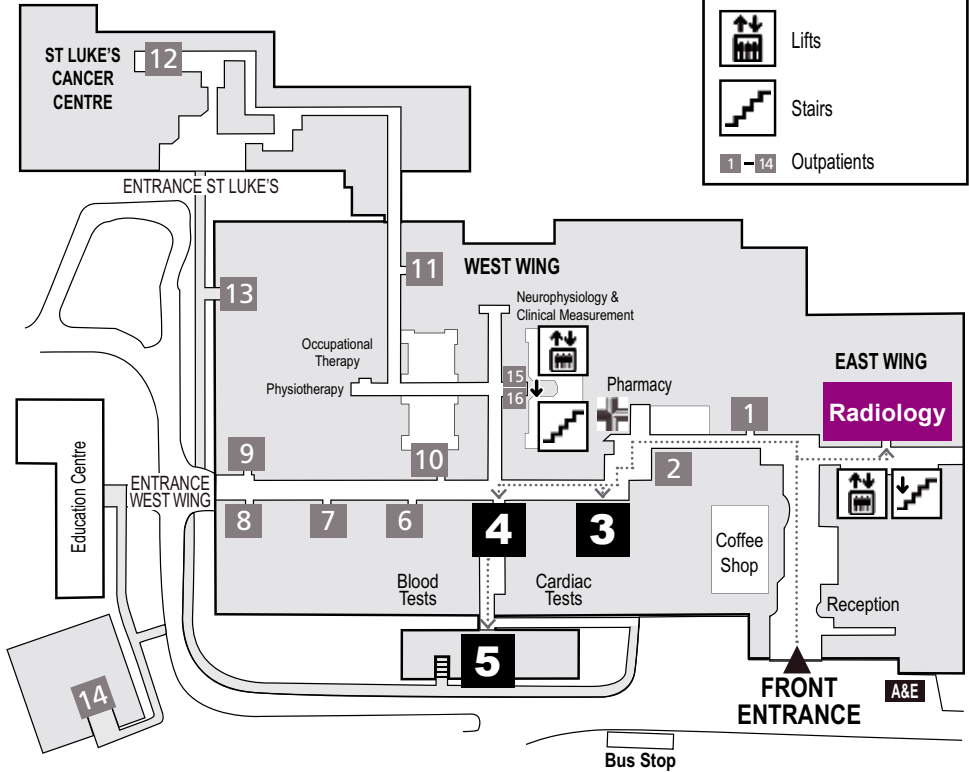
<http://www.pelvicorganprolapsesupport.org/everything-youve-wanted-to-know-about-a-proctogram/>

How to find the Radiology Department

Royal Surrey County Hospital map
Level B (Ground floor)

KEY

-  1 To clinics on next floor (above or below)
-  Lifts
-  Stairs
-  1-14 Outpatients



Contact details

If you have any questions or would like to know more about this procedure, please telephone the Radiology Department:

Telephone: 01483 464150

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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