What is a Defecating Proctogram?

A defecating proctogram is an examination performed in Radiology to investigate anal and rectal problems (e.g., prolonged constipation, incontinence or prolapse). This test is one of the few ways to examine the anatomy and function of the rectum and anus.

Who will perform the test?

A radiologist (doctor) and a radiographer (technologist taking x-rays) will be involved in the examination. A nurse may also be present. Every effort is made to ensure that your privacy and comfort is maintained throughout the procedure.

How is the test performed?

- X-rays are taken both as still photographs and as a short (30 second) video sequence during this examination.
- Before the test begins and x-ray will be performed to ensure the bowel preparation has cleared out the faecal material completely.
- A rectal tube will be inserted into the anus and a small amount of barium liquid (contrast) and barium paste is introduced. This fills the rectum so it can be visualised on x-ray. Females will have a small amount of barium injected into the vagina to act as an anatomical reference point for the referring doctor.
- Several x-rays will be obtained as well as a short sequence where you will be seated on a commode and asked to pass the barium.
- There is a toilet nearby for use, after the procedure finished if required.

What preparation is needed?

Your bowel needs to be cleared before the test. You will need to purchase the bowel preparation listed in the outpatient procedure information from your chemist at least two days prior to your appointment. It is important to follow the instructions for the bowel prep which you will be commenced on the day before your procedure.
What should I expect after the procedure?
Barium is a white colour and you may notice it pass post exam on the next few times you go to the toilet. There should be no pain or discomfort.

When will the result be available?
The results will be available to referring doctors the same day.

Further questions
Please contact your doctor or the Radiology Department at the Alfred (9076 5486)

Radiation Risk
Most medical imaging tests, except MRI and Ultrasound, involve exposure to radiation from X-rays. Your doctor considers that the benefits of the examination you require to be greater than the small risk posed by the radiation exposure.

Contact information
Ph: (03) 9076 2118
Email: radiologybookings@alfred.org.au

Radiology – the Alfred
55 Commercial Road, Melbourne VIC 3004
T 03 9076 2000
alfredhealth.org.au

References
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists®

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If you would like to provide feedback contact us at patient.information@alfred.org.au