Defecating Proctogram

What is a Defecating Proctogram?
A defecating proctogram is an examination performed under x-ray guidance to investigate anal and rectal problems (e.g. prolonged constipation, incontinence or prolapse). Barium, a type of fluid that is visible on x-ray images, is introduced into the large bowel via a small tube which is inserted into the rectum. This test is one of the few ways to examine the anatomy and function of the rectum and anus.

What to Bring:
Bring any relevant imaging scans (film packet or a CD containing X-rays, CT scans, ultrasound or MRIs etc.).

Preparation:
You will be provided with an information sheet containing bowel preparation instructions to empty your bowel for your procedure. It is important to strictly follow the proper bowel preparation as any faeces remaining in the bowel will result in the test being postponed.

Eating/ drinking:
Please strictly follow the bowel preparation information sheet.

Medications:
Please bring a list of all your medications with you to your appointment.

Procedure:
On arrival to the radiology department our staff will discuss with you your medical history and ask you to change into a patient gown.

The doctor will explain the procedure to you and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

During the procedure you will be lying on your left side. The doctor will insert a small rectal tube into the rectum. Barium will be introduced into the rectum via this rectal tube so it can be seen on x-ray. You may experience feelings of fullness but it should not be painful. Females will have a small amount of barium injected into the vagina to act as an anatomical reference point for the images.

You will then be repositioned sitting on a commode and asked to pass the barium while several x-ray images are obtained. After sufficient images are obtained the tube will be removed and you may go to the bathroom.
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Every effort is made to ensure that your privacy and comfort is maintained throughout the procedure.

**Post Procedure Care:**
You may inadvertently pass some liquid stool motions after the test.

Maintaining good fluid intake for the first few days after the defecating proctogram is encouraged. This assists in washing the barium out of the bowels and preventing constipation. Bowel motions may appear grey/white in colour until the barium is washed out.

**Discharge**
You will be able to go home immediately after your scan if you have no other medical conditions/concerns that require treatment.

**Results:**
The results together with the procedure report will be sent to your referring doctor.

Return to your doctor to discuss examination results.

**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.

Please advise us at the time of booking and/or at the time of your procedure, if you think you may be pregnant.

**Contact information:**
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alfredhealth.org.au

**References:**
Inside Radiology:
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists®