



Information for Patients

Anorectal Physiology Studies and Endoanal Ultrasound Scanning

You have been referred to the Warrell Unit for tests of the muscles and nerves around your back passage (anus). The results may help you and your doctor to better understand why you are having problems in this area.

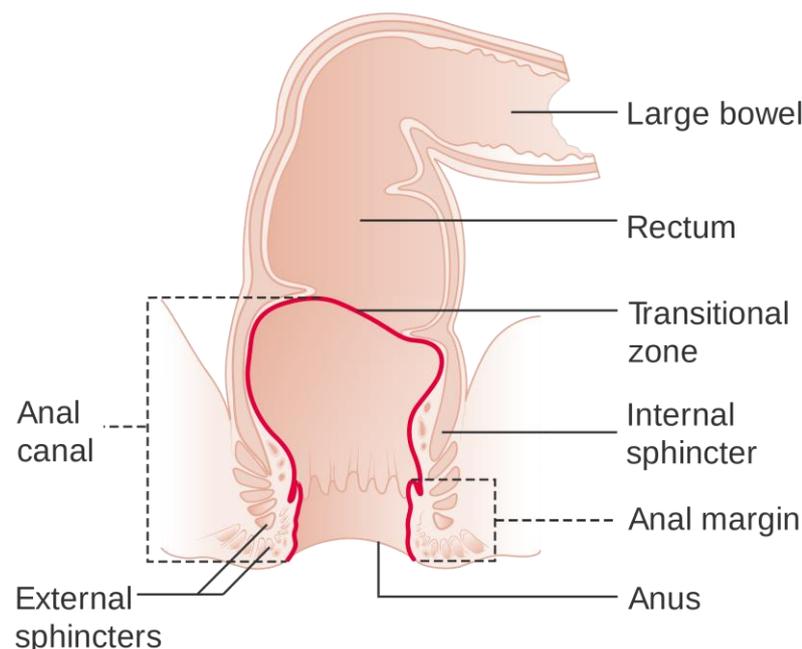
What are the anal sphincter muscles?

The anus is surrounded by sphincter muscles.

The inner tube of muscle, called the internal anal sphincter, keeps the anus closed and automatically opens when you need to move your bowels.

The outer tube of muscle, called the external anal sphincter, allows you to decide when to open your bowels as you can squeeze it together to stop your bowels emptying.

The functioning of the muscles can be examined by doing the following tests:



1. Ano-rectal physiology studies

A tiny balloon is placed into the back passage to measure the muscle strength at rest and while you are squeezing.

Another balloon is used to measure how sensitive your back passage is. As the balloon is inflated with air you will be asked to tell us when you begin to feel a change, when you need to open your bowels and when the feeling is desperate. Once the air is released and the balloon removed, the feeling will go away. You will not have an accident.

Another instrument is used to check that the nerve supply to the muscles is working properly. Once in the back passage the probe will send a small electric current to the muscle. When the current reaches the muscle, it will squeeze very quickly for a few seconds. Patients describe feeling a twitching, throbbing or pulsing sensation around the anus or in the surrounding area but you should not feel any pain or discomfort. This will be done on the right and the left.

On certain occasions (depending on your individual problems) other tests may be necessary. This will be discussed with you at your appointment.

2. Endo-anal ultrasound scan

A scan probe is placed inside the back passage to see what the muscles look like and pictures are taken. You will just be aware of the probe inside – you should not feel any pain or discomfort.

All of these tests can be carried out at your appointment as each one takes only a few minutes.

No bowel preparation is needed and you can eat and drink normally before.

These tests will not affect your ability to drive afterwards.

If you have any questions please contact the Warrell Unit Clinical Nurse Specialist on:

(0161) 701 6150, Monday – Friday, 8.30 am – 5.00 pm