

# Having a urine flow test

Department of Urology

Information for Patients

Produced: August 2022

Review: August 2025

Leaflet number: 1321 Version: 1

## What is a urine flow test?

A urine flow test is a simple test to measure the rate at which you pee (pass urine), the amount you pass and how long you take to pass urine. You will also need to have an ultrasound scan of your bladder (bladder scan) before and after you pass urine as part of the test.

The test is used to check how your bladder and sphincter are working and if there is a blockage affecting normal urine outflow.

The bladder is part of the urinary tract. It is a hollow organ that relaxes and expands to store urine. The bladder contracts and flattens to empty urine through a tube (urethra) and out of the body. The sphincter muscle is a circular muscle. It closes tightly, like a rubber band, around the bladder opening. This helps keep urine from leaking.

The flow test involves you passing urine into a special device which electronically measures how much urine is passed and how quickly it is passed. You may need to do this test more than once so your clinic visit may take a few hours, depending on how quickly your bladder fills back up again after you have emptied it.

The ultrasound bladder scan will be on your lower abdomen to see if you have emptied your bladder fully. Gel will be placed on your lower abdomen and a hand held device will be moved across this area. This will show how much urine is left in your bladder after you have passed urine during the test.

## Why do I need this test?

You may have been referred for this test if you are having problems when you pass urine, such as urgency, how often you pee or if your usual stream of urine flow has changed.

Various reasons may cause a change to normal urine flow such as enlargement of the prostate gland in men, a urinary tract blockage or frequent urinary tract infections.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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Some people may experience problems with urine flow after previous surgery.

The results from the flow test and bladder scan will help your doctor/ nurse to find the cause of your problem and decide on the most appropriate treatment or further tests for you. For example you may be referred for a urodynamics assessment to measure the pressure within your bladder if needed.

Some patients may need a urine flow test before starting specific treatment such as radiotherapy for other conditions.

## What happens on the day of my appointment?

You should try to come to the clinic with your bladder comfortably full. **Please do not overfill and be uncomfortable.** When you arrive for your appointment please do not pass urine until you have spoken to the nurse who will assess whether you are ready to perform the test.

If you find it difficult to hold your urine when your bladder is full, please inform staff as soon as you arrive. In this situation, you do not need to completely fill your bladder and risk leakage before you arrive; staff can provide you with enough fluid to fill your bladder in the clinic.

There are no side effects from this test and you will be able to carry on as normal after the test.

The nurse or doctor may speak to you about the results before you leave or may write to you with the results. If you need a follow-up appointment with your doctor or referral for further tests, this will be arranged for you.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about your test please contact the specialist nurse on 0116 258 4632 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm)

## Further information

For more information about bladder problems:

- Bladder & Bowel Community Support Network: [www.bladderandbowel.org](http://www.bladderandbowel.org)
- The British Association of Urological Surgeons: [www.baus.org.uk/patients](http://www.baus.org.uk/patients)

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