Patient Instructions: URODYNAMICS

Introduction: How does the lower urinary tract work?

The urinary tract includes the kidneys, ureters, bladder, urethra, and urethral sphincter muscle. Urine is produced by the kidneys and flows continuously down the ureters into the bladder. One of the bladder's main responsibilities is to store urine. As the bladder fills with urine, the bladder wall muscle stretches and relaxes. The sphincter muscles at the bottom of the bladder should be tight and not let the urine leak out as the bladder fills with urine. When the bladder is full, a message is sent to the brain that it is time for you to empty your bladder, which is the bladder’s second main responsibility. Your bladder muscle then squeezes while the sphincter muscles and pelvic floor muscles relax and let the urine out through the urethra. After your bladder empties, your sphincter muscles tighten up again so that the urine stays in the bladder.

Why would I need an Urodynamic study?

After your healthcare provider has spent some time going over your symptoms and complaints, performed a physical exam and possibly done some simple urine tests, he or she may feel the puzzle isn’t complete and may order an Urodynamics study. Urodynamic studies are most often ordered by your urologist to evaluate one or more of the following problems:

- Leakage of urine (called urinary incontinence)
- Difficulty starting urinary stream
- Difficulty emptying bladder completely or urinary retention
- Frequent and urgent urinations
- Urinary problems after bladder, urethral, and/or prostate surgery
- Neurological problems affecting bladder function
Preparation for Urodynamics

1. Please leave a urine sample in any Kaiser lab at least one week prior to this procedure.

2. Please call the Department of Urology at 393-4064 if you need to cancel or reschedule this procedure. If you reschedule or cancel this appointment, there may be a delay in receiving a new appointment due to limited availability. If you must cancel, please do so at least a week before your scheduled appointment so that it can be assigned to another patient.

3. Diet: No restrictions

4. Activity: No restrictions

5. Medications: Please stop the following medication 3 days prior to your appointment: Ditropan, Detrol, Enablex, Oxytrol, Sanctura, and Vesicare. You may take all of your other medications as prescribed.

6. Try to come to the urodynamic study appointment with a full bladder. If you can’t hold your urine, it is okay to urinate prior to the study. You do not need to have a full bladder if you have a catheter. Follow your normal routine if you self catheterize your bladder.

7. Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time.

8. The test takes approximately 60 to 90 minutes.
Description of the test

An urodynamic test is designed to test your bladder function by measuring the pressures in your bladder and rectum. You may experience slight discomfort and possibly embarrassment during the test. Your providers will do everything possible to make this procedure as comfortable as possible for you. Sedation and numbing medicines cannot be used because they will alter the test results and because you will need to be awake and alert during the procedure.

You will first be asked to urinate into a special commode and the results will be recorded.

Next, you will be asked to undress from the waist down and will lie on an exam table. Small tubes will then be placed into both your bladder and rectum. Two small sticky electrical patches will be placed on the skin next to the anus. These catheters and patches will then be connected to a computer, which measures the pressures in your bladder and rectum and electrical activity of your urinary sphincter, respectively. Once you are ready for the test, your bladder will be slowly filled with fluid. The doctor and nurse will ask you to describe your bladder sensations as your bladder is filled with fluid. When your bladder is maximally full, you will be asked to urinate with the tubes and patches in place. You will be given privacy while urinating. The computer will record your bladder and rectal pressures as the bladder is filled and emptied during urination. Once your doctor is satisfied that this test has provided the necessary information, the small tubes are removed and the exam is over.
After the test

You may have a mild bladder and rectal discomfort for a few hours after the test. You may experience some frequent urination and slight burning the first few times you urinate after the test. Infrequently, the urine is blood tinged. These are both due to catheter placements and resolve quickly. You should call your doctor immediately if you have signs of infection, which may include bladder pain, urinary urgency, burning during urination. Most people tolerate this test very well and experience no discomfort whatsoever. We do encourage you to drink plenty of water after the test.

In closing

After your Urodynamics are completed, your healthcare provider will review all the information and discuss the results with you. Then you and your healthcare provider will decide on the best plan of treatment for you.