

Anorectal Manometry



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What is Anorectal Manometry?

Anorectal manometry is a test that evaluates bowel function in patients with constipation or stool leakage. It is done on an outpatient basis with mild discomfort.

It measures:

- Strength of the anal sphincter muscles
- Sensation of stooling in the rectum
- Reflexes that govern bowel
- Movements of the rectal and anal muscles

Who should have Anorectal Manometry?

Anorectal manometry is useful in the diagnosis of the following conditions:

- Constipation, particularly difficulty with stool evacuation (dyssynergic defecation)
- Stool leakage or fecal incontinence
- Hirshsprungs disease (a childhood disorder)
- Anorectal function before or after bowel surgery

How is Anorectal manometry performed?

The test takes about 60 minutes. A small, flexible sensor is placed in your rectum. This is connected to a computer and a recording device that measures the pressure and strength of your anal and rectal muscles.

The technician may ask you to perform certain maneuvers such as to squeeze or to relax or to push as if to pass stool. To squeeze, you will be asked to tighten the anal sphincter muscles as if you are trying to prevent anything from coming out of your rectum. To push or bear down, you are asked to strain down as if you are trying to pass a bowel movement.

During the test, the small balloon attached to the catheter may be inflated in the rectum to assess the normal reflexes and to assess how you perceive stool sensation in your rectum.

Based on the findings during anorectal manometry, your physician may recommend biofeedback therapy to help improve defecation or incontinence (stool leakage) by strengthening the muscles used in passing stool.

What are the risks?

Anorectal manometry is a safe test. It is unlikely to cause pain. Complications are rare: it is possible that perforation (tearing) or bleeding of the rectum may occur. If you are allergic to latex you should inform the technician before the test. It is natural for you to feel shy or embarrassed during the test but the technicians and physicians are dedicated professionals who will make this experience as comfortable as possible.

Anorectal manometry and biofeedback therapy are now offered at the Heartland Center for Motility, under the supervision of Dr. Ashok Attaluri, within Gastroenterology Consultants. Dr. Attaluri is an expert in Motility Disorders of the gastrointestinal tract.