

Having a Digital Proctoscopy in the centre for Urgent Care

What is a digital proctoscopy?

A digital proctoscopy is an examination of the anus and lower part of the rectum. The examination is performed using a proctoscope (a plastic or metal tube with a camera and light on it).

What is a digital proctoscopy used for?

If you are experiencing diarrhoea due to your treatment, your doctor or nurse may suggest a digital proctoscopy.

The aim of the procedure is to determine any abnormalities of the anus, the lower part of the colon or rectum such as inflammation, ulcer or bleeding. It is possible to obtain tissue samples for additional laboratory testing.

Preparation for your digital proctoscopy:

Be sure and advise us of any medication you are currently taking. If you are on anti-coagulants or blood thinners, you will be given instructions by the doctor or nurse before the procedure.

To allow a clear view of the rectum, your bowels must be empty. To enable this, you may need suppositories in the hospital to clear lower bowel before the examination. Your doctor or nurse will give you instructions on how to do this on the day.

What happens during the digital proctoscopy?

Your digital proctoscopy procedure will be carried out in one of the rooms in Centre for Urgent Care. A nurse will stay with you throughout the examination. If necessary, the team will put an IV cannula line in your arm and take routine bloods for testing. Your observations (temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and oxygen levels) will be monitored.

You will need to undress from the waist down, a hospital gown will be provided for you to change into.

The doctor or nurse will ask you to lie on your left side and bring your knees to your chest on a trolley. A specially trained doctor or nurse who has expertise in performing the digital proctoscopy procedure will firstly perform an external examination of the anus and surrounding area. They will then begin the internal examination of the anus using a lubricant, this is known as a digital exam.

The lubricated proctoscope is then gently inserted into the anal passage for examination. You may experience some abdominal cramping and pressure from the air which is introduced into your



lower bowel, this is to help the trained doctor and nurse to get a clearer view of your lower bowel. This feeling is normal and should pass quickly.

Photographs, video and tissue samples of the lower part of the bowel may be taken. The specially trained doctor or nurse will discuss this with you, and it can be done immediately. The proctoscope is then gently removed when completed.

The test will take up to 15 – 30 minutes, during this time a nurse will be present throughout the examination.

Recovery after digital proctoscopy

A digital proctoscopy is normally carried out without sedation so you can go home immediately once the test has been completed. Preferably, once you have had a small snack and follow up instructions have been provided.

You can resume normal activities such as eating and drinking immediately after.

What are the risks from a digital proctoscopy?

Most digital proctoscopies are performed without any complications; however, all procedures have some associated risks and side effects.

Some patients experienced minor side-effects such as.

- cramping pains,
- bloating and excess wind.

On rare occasions the digital proctoscopy can cause some damage to the rectum or colon. The normal risk of this is 1 in 1000. The procedure may also cause a small amount of bleeding, infection or a hole in the colon.

If you experience severe stomach pain, bloody bowel movements, rectal bleeding, or a raised temperature after the procedure, seek medical advice either by calling The **Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline on 020 8915 6899** or go to your local hospital immediately.

FAQ's

Will it hurt?

A proctoscopy can be uncomfortable but shouldn't be painful. The nurse will monitor your pain throughout and can administer pain control if needed.

When do I get my results?

The aim is to have the results available on the day and explained to you by the doctor or nurse.

How long will I be in hospital for?

It may take up to 3 hours for the whole procedure to be completed.

Can my relatives stay with me?

Yes, a family member or relative can stay with you

