

Urodynamics

Description

Urodynamic testing is a bladder function study to help diagnose and treat problems with your urinary system. Using catheters and electrodes, the doctor is able to study the way the bladder stores and empties fluids. This is an outpatient procedure (not surgery) that takes an hour or more. This procedure should not interfere with your normal activities. Because no sedation is used, there are no restrictions regarding work, driving, or other similar activities.

If this is the first time your bladder has been studied, you may need to stop taking some medications for a period of time before you have the procedure. Your doctor will tell you which medications you should stop and which ones you should continue to take.

Urodynamic testing should not be done if you have a bladder infection. If you have symptoms of fever, chills, foul smelling urine, painful urination, and/or back pain within 7 days prior to your test, you should call your doctor. Your doctor will prescribe antibiotics and test your urine to make sure that you are ready for the test.

Usually, you will be asked to keep a record for several days before the test. This record includes the fluids that you drink, leaking or wetness episodes, and the amount of urine you pass.

For the urodynamics test you are asked to empty your bladder. A small tube called a catheter is put into your bladder, two small patches like Band-Aids are used to hold the catheter in place, and a small balloon is placed in your rectum. The bladder will be slowly filled with dye. You are asked questions about when your bladder feels full and several X-rays will be taken of your bladder.

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After the catheter, rectal balloon, and adhesive patches are removed, you are asked to stand, listen to water running, wash your hands, and bounce on your heels. You then walk to the toilet and empty your bladder as usual.

Risks

The risks of this test are minimal. Because x-rays are taken, you are exposed to a small amount of radiation. If you are a premenopausal woman a pregnancy test is done. Sometimes the catheter may cause a little discomfort, and there is a slight risk of your developing an inflammation or urinary tract infection. There is also a minimal risk that you may be allergic to the dye.

Benefits

Sometimes your doctor may not be able to diagnose your bladder problem without the help of some specialized testing. Urodynamic testing will provide detailed information about your bladder without hospitalization, sedation, or surgery.