

What is Anorectal Manometry?

OVERVIEW

Anorectal manometry is a test commonly used to check the muscle pressure and function of the anal sphincter and rectal muscles. The better these muscles function, the easier it is for you to pass and eliminate stool from your bowels.

Your board-certified gastroenterologist may recommend you do this test if you're experiencing symptoms of bowel incontinence or constipation.



How does Anorectal Manometry Work?

This is a minimally invasive procedure, typically performed by a nurse. During the anorectal manometry test, which typically takes less than 1 hour, a lubricated catheter with a small balloon at the tip is inserted into the anus past the anal sphincter muscles and into the rectum.

You will be required to perform a series of squeezes, such as holding in a bowel movement and pushing it out. The small balloon at the end of the catheter is gradually also inflated and deflated, which results in the sphincter muscles in your anus and rectum contracting and relaxing.

A machine attached to the catheter records the contractions and relaxations of the muscles, which your gastroenterologist will then evaluate.

Generally this is a very safe procedure. The risks of this procedure include tearing or bleeding of the intestinal wall, but this is very rare.