



## **What is Urodynamics?**

### **Patient Fact Sheet**

Your healthcare provider has ordered a Urodynamic study. Urodynamics is a group of tests that allow us to look at how your lower urinary tract works. Your lower urinary tract includes the bladder which stores the urine, and the urethra which is the tube that carries urine from your bladder to the outside.

### **How does your lower urinary tract work?**

The bladder's responsibility is to store and empty your urine. The bladder is made up of muscle that should work to do this in a way that keeps urine from backing up to the kidneys. In other words, as the kidneys fill the bladder, the urine is stored there. The bladder muscle should stretch easily to allow the bladder to fill. The sphincter muscles at the bottom of the bladder should be tight and not let urine leak out. Urine can leak out for several reasons. Sometimes it is because the sphincter muscles are weak or because the bladder is overactive.

When the bladder is full, a message is sent to the brain that it is time for you to empty your bladder. Your bladder muscles then squeeze while the sphincter muscles relax and let the urine out. Sometimes a blockage in the urine tube or urethra can cause the urine flow to be weak. Different things, such as a dropped bladder can cause this.

After your bladder empties, your sphincter muscles tighten up again so that the urine stays in the bladder.

### **Why do I need Urodynamics?**

Your healthcare provider has spent some time going over your symptoms and complaints. He or she has also done a physical exam and some simple urine tests. Sometimes this information doesn't clearly spell out the problem.

Urodynamics helps identify specific problems related to:

- Controlling your urine
- Not emptying your bladder completely
- Feeling of frequent and /or urgent need to urinate
- Weak or intermittent (stopping and starting) urine flow
- Frequent urinary tract infections

### **What should I expect?**

There are several pieces that make up the Urodynamics study.

You should plan to arrive with a full bladder. You will be asked to urinate into a special commode chair. This will measure how much urine comes out and how fast it comes out. This is called a **Uroflow**.



Next, a catheter (a small soft tube) will be placed into your bladder to drain out all the leftover urine. This will show how well your bladder emptied. Through a catheter, your bladder will be filled and the pressure of your bladder muscle and its response to being filled will be measured. At the same time, an estimate of the pressures outside the bladder will be measured by inserting another small soft tube, or catheter, into the vagina or rectum. This tube is about the size of a suppository or a spaghetti noodle. It doesn't do anything but measure pressure. The measurement of the bladder pressure is called a **Cystometrogram (or CMG)**.

As the bladder fills, the different pressure measurements will be recorded and you will be asked to cough and push or bear down to check for any leakage. You will also be asked about the way your bladder feels as it is filling. Your bladder will be filled with a sterile water type fluid. Filling your bladder should not hurt.

Small sticky patches are placed on either side of your bottom to measure the electrical activity of certain muscles. This is called an **Electromyogram (or EMG)**.

When you feel your bladder is full, you will be asked to empty your bladder into the special commode chair again. This time you will urinate with the tubes in place. The tube in your bladder is a special kind of catheter and will let the urine or fluid come out around it. This lets us look at your bladder function as it tries to empty. This is called a **Voiding Pressure Study or a Pressure Flow Study**.

Other things that might happen include:

- The catheter might be moved back and forth to get some extra information about the urine channel or urethra.
- After your test you will be asked to drink more fluids than normal for the next 24 hours and you may receive an antibiotic as a precaution to prevent infection. You will be asked to call the office if you have any pain or burning with urination that continues into the following day. **815-233-0999**.

### **Your Results...**

You will be asked to make a follow-up appointment in one week with the doctor to discuss your results with you. You and your healthcare provider will then decide on the best plan of treatment for you.