



PERFORMING A MAXIMUM URINARY FLOW RATE TEST (UROFLOWMETRY)

Information about your condition from
The British Association of Urological Surgeons (BAUS)

You have been given this leaflet because you need assessment for your bladder problems. The aim of the leaflet is to provide you with advice on how we measure your **maximum urinary flow rate**.

We have consulted specialist surgeons during its preparation, so it represents best practice in UK urology. You should use it in addition to any advice already given to you.

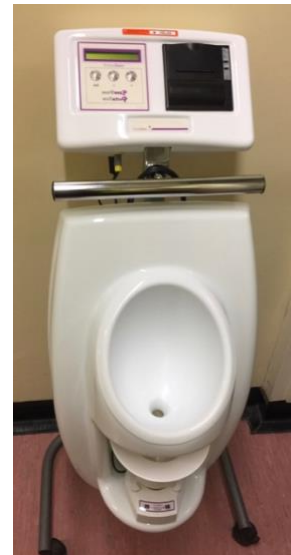
To view the online version of this leaflet, type the text below into your web browser:

[http://www.baus.org.uk/_userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/Flow rate measurement.pdf](http://www.baus.org.uk/_userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/Flow%20rate%20measurement.pdf)

What is a flow rate test?

As part of the assessment of your bladder problems, your doctor needs to measure how fast you pass urine (maximum urinary flow rate). This involves you passing your urine into a special device (pictured) which measures electronically how fast your urine is expelled. You may need to do this test more than once so your clinic visit can take several hours. This depends on how quickly your bladder re-fills after you have emptied it.

After you have emptied your bladder into the flow rate device, we normally use an ultrasound bladder scanner to see if your bladder has emptied fully.



We usually carry out this test just before you see your urologist or specialist nurse. They will then have the flow rate available so they can discuss the results of your other tests, questionnaires, ultrasound scans or X-rays.

How should I prepare for the test?

You should try to come to the clinic with your bladder comfortably full. If there is less than 150 ml (a quarter of a pint) in your bladder, the results of the test may not be satisfactory.

If you find it difficult to hold on to your urine when your bladder is full, please inform the staff as soon as you arrive. In this situation, you do not

need to over-fill your bladder and risk leakage before you arrive; the staff can provide you with enough fluid to fill your bladder in the clinic.

Please note: you may receive similar instructions about filling your bladder from the Ultrasound Scanning Department, before you have a scan of your urinary tract. Those instructions should be followed separately from these.

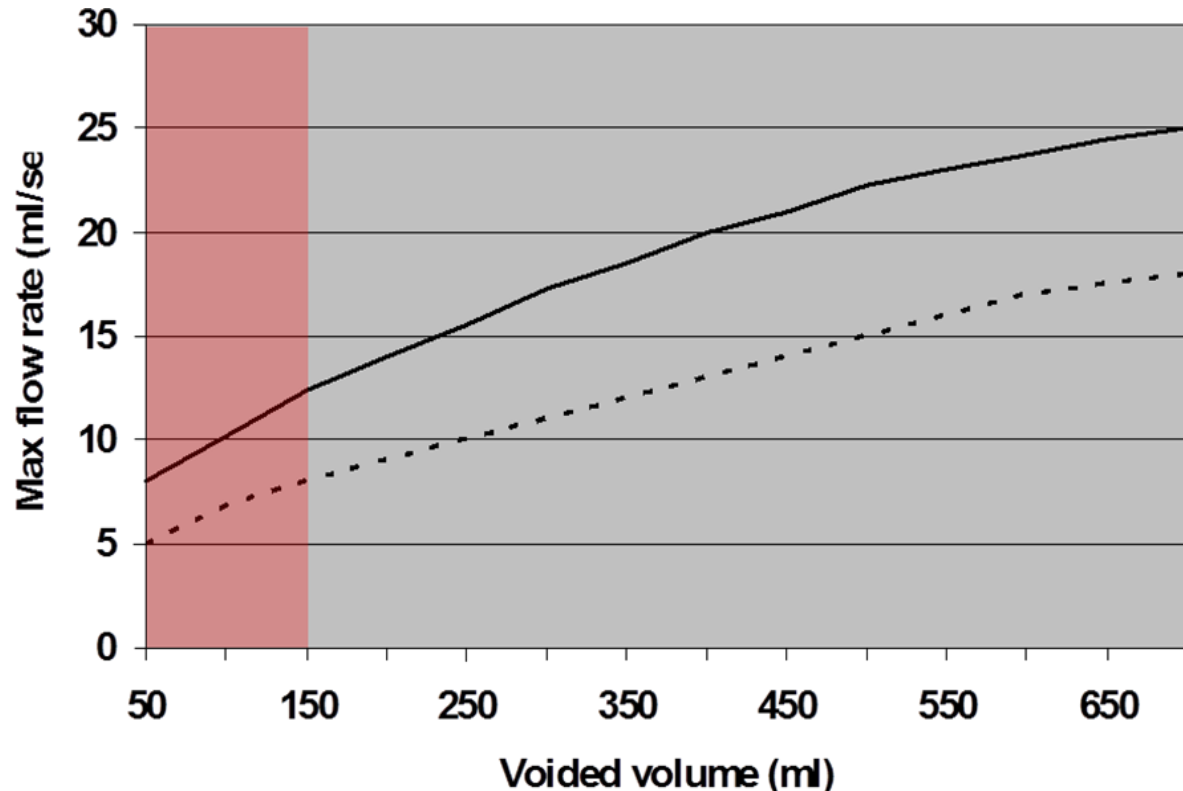
What happens if my bladder is NOT full enough for the test?

If your bladder is not full enough, you may need to return later to repeat the test. It is, therefore, important that your bladder is “comfortably full” by the time you are ready to do the flow rate test.

When you arrive for your test, please show this information leaflet to the receptionist or clinic nurse. They will arrange for the test to be done as soon as possible.

Graph for plotting your flow rate

The result of the test allows us to plot a point on the graph corresponding to your maximum urinary flow rate and the amount of urine you passed. We can compare this with results from previous tests on the same graph, to see how your flow rate changes with time or after any treatment.



The solid line shows an average normal flow rate. The red area shows where your urine volume is not enough for a valid measurement (i.e. you passed less than 150 ml). The area below the dotted line shows where the flow rate is significantly reduced.

What should I do with this information?

Thank you for taking the trouble to read this information. Please let your urologist (or specialist nurse) know if you would like to have a copy for your own records. If you wish, the medical or nursing staff can also arrange to file a copy in your hospital notes.

What sources have we used to prepare this leaflet?

This leaflet uses information from consensus panels and other evidence-based sources including:

- the [Department of Health \(England\)](#);
- the [Cochrane Collaboration](#); and
- the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#).

It also follows style guidelines from:

- the [Royal National Institute for Blind People \(RNIB\)](#);
- the [Information Standard](#);
- the [Patient Information Forum](#); and
- the [Plain English Campaign](#).

Disclaimer

We have made every effort to give accurate information in this leaflet, but there may still be errors or omissions. BAUS cannot accept responsibility for any loss from action taken (or not taken) as a result of this information.

PLEASE NOTE

The staff at BAUS are not medically trained, and are unable to answer questions about the information provided in this leaflet. If you do have any questions, you should contact your urologist, specialist nurse or GP.