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Mid Cheshire Hospitals **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Rectal Bleeding

The Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain and Ireland

The Association's website has information for
patients about a variety of bowel conditions at
www.acpgbi.org.uk

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Rectal bleeding

This leaflet has been prepared from talking to patients who have had rectal bleeding. It may not answer all your questions so if you have any further questions or worries please don't hesitate to ask.

What causes rectal bleeding

There are different reasons for passing blood from the back passage including inflammation of the stomach or bowel, ulcers anywhere in the digestive system, haemorrhoids or polyps in the lower bowel. To try and find out the cause you could undergo some of the following investigations.

What should you expect?

You may be asked to supply three bowel specimens. If you are bleeding slowly from the stomach or bowel the blood will be mixed with your bowel motion and may not be visible to the naked eye. It can be identified on a stool smear test.

To examine the lining of the stomach a gastroscopy will be performed which involves a thin tube with a camera attachment being passed down your mouth into your stomach so that direct vision can be obtained. Sedation is sometimes used.

A colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy may be needed, this entails a thin tube being passed into the back passage so that the bowel can be examined, this is usually done under sedation.

X-rays may be ordered for you such as a barium meal or barium enema. These tests allow detailed pictures of your stomach and bowel to be obtained which can show up any problems.

Ultrasound, CT and MRI scans are special tests which give a more in-depth picture of other organs in your abdomen. Your Consultant may think that either of these tests may be appropriate for you.

The preparation

Before some specific tests the bowel or stomach needs to be as empty as possible. The nursing staff looking after you will inform you of any preparation you may need.

After the tests

As soon as the results of any tests you have had are available, a member of the nursing or medical staff will be able to discuss the findings of the test with you.

Treatment very much depends on the cause, bleeding from the back passage does not always mean an operation so try not to worry too much until you know exactly what is going on.