

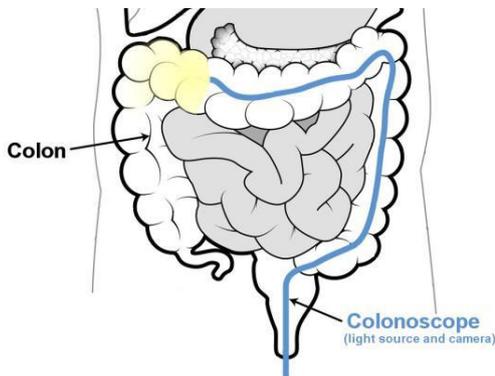


Patient information sheet

Lower Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (Colonoscopy)

What is it?

Colonoscopy is a procedure that enables your doctor to examine your large bowel (colon) and the last portion of the small bowel that joins the colon.



A bendable, lighted tube about the thickness of your little finger is passed through your anus and around your colon. This procedure enables clear views of these areas and biopsies (small samples of tissue) can be collected for further examination under a microscope. Procedures such as removal of polyps or the burning of bleeding points using argon plasma coagulation can also be performed.

What kind of preparation is needed?

Preparation for the test involves bowel cleansing. This is very important to ensure a safe and effective examination can be undertaken. This needs to be done mainly the day before but a complete preparation should be planned ahead and may take several days. Please refer to the **bowel preparation instruction sheet**. It is important you follow the instructions closely.

If you have important daily medication to take, such as blood pressure tablets, you may do so with a sip of water in the morning or afternoon. Most medications can be continued as usual. Medication such as blood thinners e.g. **warfarin**, clopidogrel (**Plavix**), apixaban (**Eliquis**), dabigatran (**Pradaxa**) and rivaroxaban (**Xarelto**) and **diabetes** medication e.g. insulin must be discussed with your doctor prior to the examination.

What can I expect to happen?

You will be admitted by a nurse who will ask you some questions and record your vital signs. Your anaesthetist will have a chat to you. An intravenous needle will be inserted in your hand or arm to give you some sedative medication to make the procedure more comfortable for you (you will be asleep). This medication is short acting and you will usually be awake 10-15 minutes after the procedure. It is not a general anaesthetic. Further details can be discussed with the anaesthetist on the day. In exceptional cases you may wish to have this test done with no sedation at all but it may be an uncomfortable experience. Please discuss this with me well prior to the procedure. If you are also having a **gastroscopy** this will usually be performed first and the colonoscopy will follow while you remain sleeping.

Note: Sedatives may affect your judgement and reflexes for the rest of the day and you should not drive or operate machinery until the following day.

Important: You will need to have a friend or relative collect you after the procedure as you are NOT ALLOWED to drive or leave the hospital on your own.

The procedure takes approximately 15-30 minutes. The time from start to finish depends on several factors. Poor bowel cleanliness will hinder the procedure and reduce its accuracy. We are all built differently and some colons are more 'twisty' than others. The findings and the therapies that need to be done e.g. polyp removal will also affect how long it takes. If polyps are found they are usually removed. Please discuss with me if you have reservations about this.

What are the risks?

Colonoscopy is a very safe procedure. **Minor risks** include some abdominal discomfort after the procedure but this will subside once air is passed or absorbed by your bowel. Your anaesthetist will be prepared to discuss with you the risks or effects of the sedation. **Major risks** are bleeding or bowel perforation (making a hole in the bowel wall). These are rare (risk is approximately 1 in 1000) but if they occur may need treatment with surgery. The risk may increase in the event of complex procedures such as the removal of large polyps.

The test has an excellent sensitivity of picking up abnormalities but no test is perfect and things can be missed. Finally, with any medical or surgical procedure, death is a very rare and remote possibility. Please discuss any concerns with me before the day of the procedure.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be monitored in the endoscopy area for up to 1 to 2 hours until the effects of the sedatives have worn off. You will be able to resume your diet and take your routine medication unless otherwise instructed.

I will inform you of the test results on the day of the procedure. The results of any biopsies that were taken will take up to a week to return and I will discuss how these results will be followed-up with you.

In the event of any of these symptoms: large amounts of bleeding from your anus, severe abdominal pain, fever, or anything of concern, please contact me, your local GP or hospital. Bleeding after 72 hours is uncommon but can occasionally occur even several weeks after the procedure.

If you have questions about the exam or subsequent follow-up please do not hesitate to discuss them with me before or after the examination.