

# Patient information

## Colonoscopy – outpatients

You have been referred by your doctor to have a colonoscopy. This information booklet has been written to explain the procedure and help you to make an informed decision before consenting to the procedure.

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please inform us as soon as possible on **01284 713551**.

**Please ensure you read this booklet and the enclosed consent form thoroughly. Please also complete the enclosed health questionnaire.**

You may be contacted by an endoscopy trained nurse before your procedure to go through the admission process and answer any queries you may have. If you are not contacted, please come to your appointment at the time stated in your letter.

**Please note your appointment time is your arrival time on the unit and not the time of your procedure.**

**If you have any mobility issues or if there is a possibility you could be pregnant, please contact the appointment staff on 01284 713551.**

Please remember there will be other patients in the unit who may arrive after you but are taken in for their procedure before you, this is for medical reasons, or they are seeing a different doctor.

Due to limited space available and to maintain other patients' privacy and dignity, we only allow patients (and carers) through to the ward area. Relatives/escorts will be contacted once you are ready for collection.

The endoscopy unit endeavours to offer single sex facilities, and we aim to make your stay as comfortable and stress free as possible.

## Medication

If you are taking **warfarin, clopidogrel, rivaroxaban or any other anticoagulant (blood thinning medication)**, please contact the appointment staff on 01284 713551, your GP, or anticoagulation nurse for advice. If you do not seek advice, therapeutic procedures such as polyp removal cannot be performed, and you may have to undergo a repeat procedure.

If you are taking **iron tablets** (e.g. ferrous sulphate) please **stop** taking this medication **seven** days before your appointment.

**Diabetic patients** should contact their diabetic nurse or GP. Please inform them that you are required to follow a specific eating plan and will be without food for a long period of time. They can give you advice on adjusting any diabetic medication prior to the procedure.

Women taking the **oral contraceptive pill** should be aware that taking bowel preparation might prevent the absorption of the pill. Additional contraceptive precautions should be taken until you next period begins.

Please contact bookings if you have a **pacemaker or ICD (implantable cardioverter defibrillator)** on **01284 713551**.

**Please ensure you bring your current medications with you when you attend for your procedure.**

**Please note all other medication should be continued as normal.**

**If you are in any doubt whether you should stop or continue your medication, please ring 01284 712653.**

## How do I prepare for the procedure?

To allow us to complete your colonoscopy we need a clear view of your bowel - your bowel needs to be completely empty. **Therefore, it is essential that you follow the bowel preparation instructions and eating plan at the end of this booklet.** It is important to follow the instructions carefully so your bowel is empty, otherwise we may need to cancel your appointment.

It is important you increase your intake of clear fluids on the day **before** your colonoscopy. You may drink clear fluids up to **2 hours before** your procedure.

The bowel preparation will result in frequent loose stool movements. You may wish to apply a barrier cream to your bottom to avoid any irritation or soreness.

It is advisable that you wear loose fitting clothing as this is more comfortable for you after the colonoscopy.

## **What happens when I arrive?**

On arrival to the endoscopy unit, please report to reception where the receptionist will check your personal details. You will be asked to take a seat in the waiting area until you are collected by a nurse and taken through to one of our admission rooms. Due to limited space, we are unable to allow anyone to accompany you unless they are a carer. We will contact your relative/escort once you are ready to be collected.

You will be taken into the admission room where a nurse will explain the procedure and they will ask you about your health, medications and allergies. They will take your pulse and blood pressure. If you are a diabetic your blood glucose level will be checked.

The nurse will discuss the consent form with you and answer any questions that you may have. We want to make sure you understand the procedure and its implications.

You will be asked to undress and put on a hospital gown. Please bring your own dressing gown and slippers if you have them. We offer dignity pants should you wish to wear them, please ask the nurse for these. You will be asked to remove all jewellery (except your wedding ring). You may wish to leave any valuables at home, as we cannot be responsible for any valuables lost whilst you are in the unit.

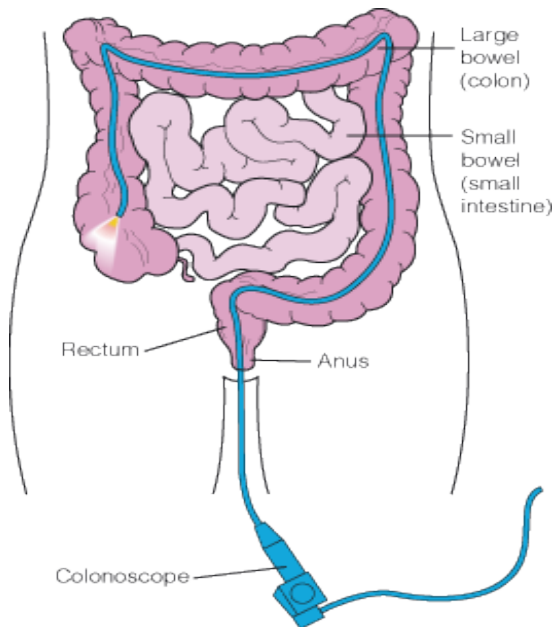
You can expect to be on the unit **2-4 hours**.

## **What is a colonoscopy?**

A colonoscopy is a procedure that allows the endoscopist to use a flexible tube called a colonoscope to look at the entire large bowel. This is done by passing the scope through your bottom and gently passing it around the large bowel.

The colonoscopy is connected to a television system, it has a light and a camera built into the end. Pictures are then seen on a television monitor and photographs are taken which will be stored on your medical record.

This examination may identify the cause of your symptoms. Sometimes we can treat them during the procedure. The procedure usually takes between 25 and 50 minutes.



## Why do I need a colonoscopy?

Your doctor is concerned about the symptoms you are experiencing with the lower part of your digestive system. A colonoscopy is used to find out if there are any problems with your digestive system. It also helps your doctor to decide on further treatment, if necessary.

A colonoscopy is used to investigate a variety of symptoms, for example:

- Persistent diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain
- Change in bowel habits
- Bleeding from the bottom
- Strong family history of bowel cancer
- Been placed on a bowel cancer screening pathway
- Have an existing condition that needs reviewing such as Crohn's disease or colitis.

A colonoscopy can also treat some conditions such as:

- Polyps
- Haemorrhoids (piles).

## **Alternatives to a colonoscopy**

A colonoscopy is the best way of looking at the lining of your large bowel. However, an X-ray examination called CT colonoscopy is one possible test; this involves having a detailed CT scan which provides pictures of the lining of your bowel. Another alternative is a colon capsule which involves swallowing a small disposable capsule the size of a large vitamin pill, the capsule contains a small wireless camera which when swallowed takes multiple pictures. Neither of the tests allow for any treatment to be performed or biopsies to be taken at the same time. Therefore, you may still need to have a colonoscopy. If you wish to discuss these alternative tests, please contact your GP or your hospital doctor.

## **How is a colonoscopy performed?**

A colonoscopy often takes between 25-50 minutes to complete. It may take longer if it is being used to treat a condition or biopsies (small samples of tissue) are taken.

You will be escorted into the procedure room and introduced to the team in the room. The endoscopist will check that you have a full understanding of the procedure, what it entails and that you are willing to go ahead.

You will then be asked to lie on the bed on your left side, with your knees slightly bent and you will be covered with a blanket.

In order to monitor your heart rate and breathing, the nurse looking after you will place a probe onto your finger. They may also monitor your blood pressure by placing a cuff on to your arm. You will be given oxygen nasally.

If you are having sedation this and/or pain relief is given through the cannula. If you have chosen to have Entonox (gas and air), you will be shown how to use this.

A nurse will be with you at all times, giving you guidance and support. The endoscopist will then examine your bottom with a gloved finger to make sure it is safe to pass the colonoscope. The colonoscope will then be gently inserted into your bottom and progressed to the large bowel.

If you have had an end colostomy the endoscopist will need to pass the colonoscope into the stoma to check the colon and you will be asked to lie on your back. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your stoma nurse.

Air will be passed through the colonoscope to open up your colon, to allow a clear view of the lining of your large bowel. This may give you some wind-like discomfort, this will not last long. You may get the sensation of wanting to go to the toilet, but as your bowel is empty there is no danger of this happening.

Some patients may experience some discomfort during and after the procedure. This should pass quickly, however, please inform the nursing team should you have any concerns.

## **What is a biopsy?**

A biopsy is a small piece of tissue which is removed through the colonoscope using tiny forceps. This procedure is painless, you will probably not be aware of it being taken.

## **What are polyps?**

Polyps are extra growths of tissue on the bowel wall that can range in size. They are usually benign (not cancers), however, if left these can sometimes become cancers. Most polyps can be removed painlessly and completely during the procedure.

## **Medication options for the procedure**

You will usually be given sedation and pain relief for a colonoscopy, however, in some circumstances it is not possible for these medications to be given. If this is the case for you an alternative can be given - this is called Entonox (gas and air).

There are two options:

**Intravenous conscious sedation and pain relief:** We will give you sedation and pain relief through a cannula to make you feel relaxed. The sedative will make you sleepy and relaxed, however, it **will not** put you to sleep (this is **not** a general anaesthetic). This option may take away some awareness of the procedure. The pain killer will help to reduce any discomfort during the procedure.

With this option you will need a responsible adult with you for **24 hours**. They will need to collect you from the endoscopy unit and stay with you for at least 24 hours. You will not be able to drive yourself home, go back to work, operate machinery, drink alcohol, or sign any legal documents for the 24 hours period following the procedure.

**Entonox:** This is a fast-acting form of pain relief which wears off very quickly. It is administered via a hand-held mouthpiece which you will be shown how to use prior to your procedure. You do not need to have anybody at home with you and you can drive after 30 minutes.

## Are there any risks or complications?

As with every medical procedure the risk must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure carried out. The doctor who has requested the procedure will have considered this very carefully.

Colonoscopy is what is known as an invasive procedure, and carries a small risk of complications:

- **Haemorrhage (bleeding)** – removing a polyp can sometimes cause bleeding, although this is usually stopped during the procedure. Occasionally bleeding may occur when a patient has gone home and even more rarely some of these people may need a blood transfusion.
- **Perforation (tear)** – the risk of this is small, the risk is increased if any treatment is performed, i.e., removing a polyp. On rare occasions this may require an operation which involves making a temporary opening (a stoma) in the abdomen to allow the passage of waste (faeces/poo).
- **Reactions to medications given** – you may experience a reaction to the sedation given, this is rare but if this should happen, we do have medications to reverse the effects of the sedative.

As with all tests this procedure will not always show up all abnormalities and on very rare occasions, a significant abnormality may not be identified. If you have any questions about this, please discuss it with the person who referred you or speak to us when you attend for your appointment.

## After the procedure

We will tell you as much as possible about what was found after the procedure; however, biopsy results will take a few weeks to arrive.

## If you have had Entonox

This wears off very quickly and therefore no restrictions apply. You do not need anyone at home with you and you may drive after 30 minutes.

## If you have had sedation

You will be given time to recover quietly until the immediate effect of sedation has worn off. You will be offered a drink and something to eat while you wait for your escort home. **This person must come to the unit to collect you. You must have supervision by a responsible adult at home for at least 24 hours following sedation.**

The sedation lasts longer than you might imagine, so it is very important that after your procedure you do not do any of the following for at least 24 hours:

- Drive a car
- Operate machinery
- Smoke
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal documents.

## **Discharge**

When you are ready to be discharged from the procedure the nurse will tell you what was seen during your procedure and what to do next. They will record your observations and answer any questions you may have.

## **After you have been discharged**

Serious side effects from this procedure are rare, as previously stated. You may feel a little bloated if some of the air that we use for the test remains. Both these things will pass and need no medication.

### **If you experience any of the following symptoms:**

- Severe abdominal pain (not cramp caused by wind)
- A firm and swollen abdomen (stomach)
- A sudden passing of a large amount of blood from your bottom (if it is a very small amount of blood, take no action)
- High temperature or feeling feverish
- Vomiting

### **Please contact**

- The endoscopy unit which is open from 8.00am to 9.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8.00am to 6.00pm Friday. Our contact number is **01284 713952**. If you have any queries that you wish to discuss with an endoscopy nurse out of these times, please contact the West Suffolk Hospital switchboard on 01284 713000 and ask to speak to the on-call endoscopy nurse.
- Your GP
- Or contact the emergency department at the West Suffolk Hospital.



**You should contact the emergency department if you experience severe pain in the abdomen, a fever, vomiting, passing a large amount of blood after the test. Please ensure you have your endoscopy report with you.**

Please be advised that patients are unable to donate blood for four months following an endoscopy procedure, as directed by the NHS Blood and Transplant Service.

## **Summary of important information**

As with every medical procedure the risk must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure carried out. The doctor who has requested the procedure will have considered this very carefully. However, it is your decision whether you wish to go ahead with the procedure or not and you are free to change your mind at any time.

**It is everyone's aim for you to be seen as soon as possible. However, the unit can be busy, and your colonoscopy may be delayed if emergencies occur, these patients will obviously be given priority over the less urgent cases.**

Due to the limited space available and to maintain other patients' privacy and dignity we only allow patient (and carers) through to the ward area. Relatives/escorts will be contacted once you are ready for collection.

Please do not bring valuables (e.g jewellery etc.) to the hospital as the hospital cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property during your time on these premises. We advise you always keep your belongings with you.

Training doctors and other health professionals is essential to the continuation of the NHS and improving the quality of care. Your procedure/treatment may provide an important opportunity for such training under the careful supervision of an experienced endoscopist. You can, however, decline to be involved in the formal training of medical and other students; this will not affect your care and treatment.

## Checklist

### Things to remember before your procedure:

- Read all the information we have sent you carefully
- Fill in the health questionnaire
- Drink plenty of clear fluids up to **2 hours** before your appointment
- Follow specified bowel preparation and **eating plan**
- Check for specific medication instructions
- Transport arrangements have been made if you are having sedation.

### Please bring the following items with you:

- This booklet
- Your completed health questionnaire
- Your consent form (you do not need to complete this, it will be done on the unit prior to your procedure)
- all current medications.

### Contact numbers

- Cancellation/change of appointment: **telephone 01284 713551**
- Pre-assessment for medical related advice: **telephone 01284 712653**
- Endoscopy unit: **telephone 01284 713952**
- Out of hours: **telephone 01284 713000.**

# **IMPORTANT: Preparing your bowel for a colonoscopy**

Please read these instructions carefully. The success of your colonoscopy depends on your bowel being as clear as possible. **Please note, the procedure may need to be repeated if you do not have a sufficiently clear bowel.**

**For three days before your procedure, you should make changes to your diet:**

**Do not eat high fibre / high residue foods including:**

- Red meats, pink fish (e.g. salmon)
- Fruit, vegetables, salad, pips, seeds, bran, beans, lentils
- Brown bread, seeded bread, brown rice, brown pasta
- Pickles, chutneys
- High fibre cereals (e.g. bran flakes, muesli, Weetabix®).

**You can eat low fibre foods including the following:**

- Dairy – milk (2 cups/a day), plain yoghurt, cheese, butter, margarine
- Protein – white fish or chicken (boiled, steamed or grilled), eggs
- White pasta and white rice
- Bread – white bread, pitta, white flour chapattis (avoid seeded bread)
- Potatoes – boiled or mashed (no skin)
- Soups – clear soups (no solid bits)
- Meat extract drinks - Bovril® or Oxo®
- Desserts – clear jelly (not red, purple, or orange), boiled sweets, chocolate
- Salt, pepper, sugar, sweeteners, and honey.

**Please have plenty to drink including tea, coffee, squash, water, clear fruit juices and clear fizzy drinks.**

# **MORNING APPOINTMENT FOR COLONOSCOPY:**

## **The day before your colonoscopy**

Have **breakfast** choosing from the low residue food listed above.

**No further solid food or milk products are allowed after breakfast.**

**It is important to increase your intake of clear fluids:**

- You may drink water, black tea or coffee, Bovril® or Oxo®, clear fruit juice and clear fizzy drinks.

**At 5.00pm – take the single sachet Dose 1 of Plenvu, following the steps below:**

1. Empty the contents of Dose 1 into 500ml of water and stir.
2. Stir until the powder has dissolved, this can take up to eight minutes.
3. Drink all of the dissolved mixture over 30 minutes until you have drunk it all.
4. A further 500ml of clear fluid must be drunk over the next 30 minutes.
5. Alternating between the reconstituted solution and clear fluid is acceptable.

**You may begin to pass frequent loose motions, please stay near a toilet at this time.**

**At 8.00pm – take the second Dose 2 Plenvu ( Sachet A and Sachet B), following the steps below:**

1. Empty the contents of Dose 2 – Sachet A and Sachet B into 500ml of water and stir.
2. Stir until the powder has dissolved, this can take up to eight minutes.
3. Drink all of the dissolved mixture over 30 minutes until you have drunk it all.
4. A further 500ml of clear fluid must be drunk over the next 30 minutes.
5. Alternating between the reconstituted solution and clear fluid is acceptable.

Please continue drinking **clear** fluids.

## **The day of your colonoscopy**

**No solid food or milk products are allowed.** You may continue drinking clear fluids, clear fruit juices clear fizzy drinks only until 2 hours before your appointment.

Please attend your appointment on time.

## **AFTERNOON APPOINTMENT FOR COLONOSCOPY:**

### **The day before your colonoscopy**

Have **breakfast and a light lunch** choosing from the low residue food listed above, stop all food intake by 2pm.

**No further solid food or milk products are allowed after breakfast.**

**It is important to increase your intake of clear fluids:**

- You may drink water, black tea or coffee, Bovril® or Oxo®

**At 5.00pm – take the single sachet Dose 1 of Plenvu, following the steps below:**

1. Empty the contents of Dose 1 into 500ml of water and stir.
2. Stir until the powder has dissolved, this can take up to eight minutes.
3. Drink all of the dissolved mixture over 30 minutes until you have drunk it all.
4. A further 500ml of clear fluid must be drunk over the next 30 minutes.
5. Alternating between the reconstituted solution and clear fluid is acceptable.

**You may begin to pass frequent loose motions, please stay near a toilet at this time.**

## The day of your colonoscopy

**At 6.00am – take the second Dose 2 Plenvu ( Sachet A and Sachet B), following the steps below:**

1. Empty the contents of Dose 2 – Sachet A and Sachet B into 500ml of water and stir.
2. Stir until the powder has dissolved, this can take up to eight minutes.
3. Drink all of the dissolved mixture over 30 minutes until you have drunk it all.
4. A further 500ml of clear fluid must be drunk over the next 30 minutes.
5. Alternating between the reconstituted solution and clear fluid is acceptable.

Please continue drinking **clear** fluids.

## The day of your colonoscopy

**No solid food or milk products are allowed.** You may continue drinking clear fluids only until 2 hours before your appointment.

Please attend your appointment on time.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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