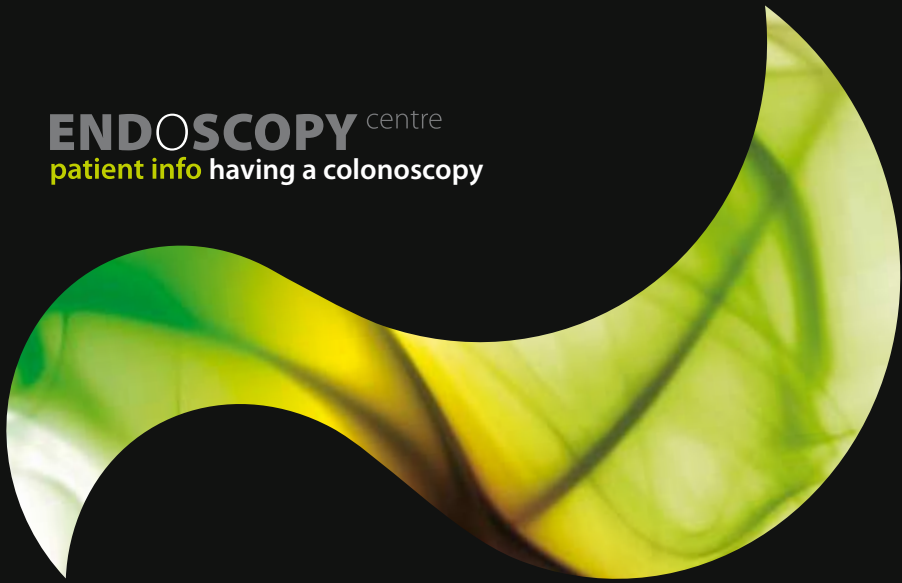


**ENDOSCOPY** centre  
patient info having a colonoscopy





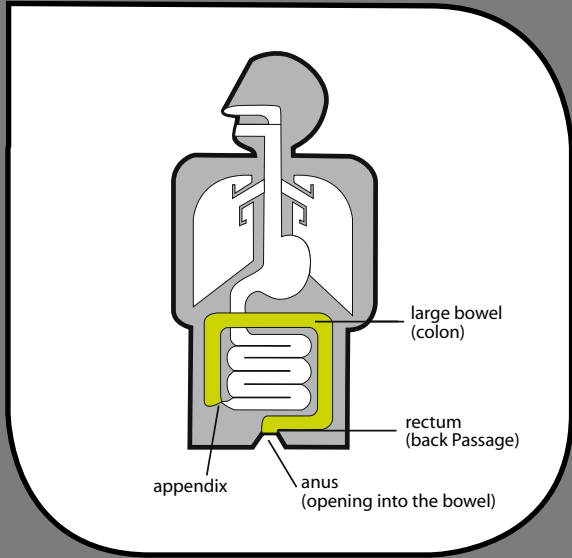
## **WHAT IS A COLONOSCOPY?**

Colonoscopy is a test that allows the doctor to look directly at the lining of the large bowel (the colon).

During the test, a colonoscope is carefully passed through the anus into the large bowel. The colonoscope is a long flexible tube, about the thickness of your index finger, with a bright light and a digital camera at the end. The doctor gets a clear view of the lining of the bowel and checks whether any disease is present.

Sometimes the doctor takes a biopsy sample of the bowel lining through the colonoscope, using tiny forceps. This is painless and safe. The biopsy is sent to the laboratory for further tests. The biopsy is sent to the laboratory for further tests.

Polyps (collections of abnormal tissue which can lead to cancer) can be removed safely and painlessly.



large bowel (colon)

rectum (back Passage)

anus (opening into the bowel)

appendix



## **PREPARATION FOR THE TEST**

To allow a clear view, the colon must be completely empty of waste material, so it is very important that you carefully follow the bowel preparation instructions below.

If you are taking any medication that makes you constipated eg codeine or loperamide or some antidepressants, please stop them 7 days before the test. If in doubt, please phone us. If you are taking iron tablets, please stop these one week before the test. If in doubt, please contact the Endoscopy unit on 020 7908 2181.

If you are diabetic or on warfarin, please let us know as soon as you receive your appointment by telephoning the Endoscopy Centre on 020 7908 2181.

You will usually be able to take all your other medications, but call us if in doubt.



## **Start your preparation the day before your test**

- 12.30 pm** Light lunch: chicken or fish (not fried), polished rice or pasta, plain yogurt, jelly or ice cream.  
Do not eat potatoes, vegetables, salad or fruit.  
*Drink plenty of clear fluids* such as water, black tea or coffee
- 4 pm** Dissolve one sachet of Picolax in 100ml of water, allow to fizz and cool, and dilute to 250ml. drink the solution over an hour.  
*Drink plenty of fluids* (water, fruit cordial, tea or coffee).
- 6 pm** Take 2 Dulcolax tablet(s) with some water.  
Expect to have diarrhoea during the evening.
- 7 pm** Light Supper: clear soup, 1 slice of white bread, plain yogurt, jelly or ice cream.  
*Drink plenty of water as before.*
- 8 pm** Make up second sachet of Picolax and take half. Keep the remaining Picolax solution in the fridge overnight.  
*Drink plenty of fluids.*



## On the day of your test:

**6 am**

*If your examination is in the MORNING*

Take the remaining Picolax.

You can drink a cup of tea or coffee without milk (you can have sugar if you wish).

Do not eat any solid food.

**6 – 8 am**

*If your examination is in the AFTERNOON*

Light breakfast: Cup of tea and a slice of white toast  
Have nothing more to eat until after your test.

**9 am**

Take the remaining Picolax solution.

Drink clear fluids until 2 hours before the test.



PICOLAX AND DULCOLAX ARE LAXATIVES CAUSING WATERY BOWEL MOTIONS AND WILL NORMALLY TAKE EFFECT 2-3 HOURS AFTER THE DOSE, BUT THIS MAY VARY. THE EFFECTS ARE USUALLY MORE MARKED AFTER THE SECOND DOSE.

INSTRUCTIONS  
FOR MIXING  
PICOLAX

*Pour the contents of one sachet into a little cold water. This will fizz and turn warm. Allow to cool for a few minutes, then make up to 250ml with water.*



## **ON ARRIVAL AT THE HOSPITAL**

Please go to the Endoscopy Centre reception, which has dedicated entrance at 40 Nottingham Place (next door to the main hospital entrance). Press the buzzer to be admitted.

Our Endoscopy Co-ordinator will greet you and verify your personal details and preferred method of payment.

Our Endoscopy nurse will then prepare you for your procedure. Please ask if you have any worries or questions.

The staff want you to be as relaxed and informed as possible for the test and will be happy to answer your queries.

Your consultant will explain the test to you and will ask you to sign a consent form to signify that you understand the test and its implications.

Please tell the consultant or nurse if you have any allergies or bad reactions to drugs or other tests.



## **WHAT DOES THE TEST INVOLVE?**

In the examination room you will be made comfortable on a couch, lying on your side. The doctor may give you a sedative injection to make you sleepy and relaxed. The consultant will then gently insert a flexible tube (colonoscope) through the anus into the large bowel. The colon will be gently inflated by passing air through it to give a clearer view of the bowel lining. You may get the sensation of wanting to go to the toilet, but as the bowel is empty there is no danger of this happening.

The test usually takes up to 30 minutes. A nurse will be with you throughout. The colonoscope is removed quickly and easily at the end of the test.



## **AFTER THE EXAMINATION**

If you have sedation, you will need to rest until you are fully awake which can take up to 2 hours. If you do not have sedation you can leave as soon as you feel ready, and can have a normal day.

You may eat and drink when you feel like it.

You may feel a little bloated and windy, but this usually settles quite quickly.

If you have had a sedative injection is it essential that someone collects you to take you home.

Your consultant will normally be able to tell you the results of your test before you go home. However if a sample (biopsy) has been taken then, the results will usually take two days.



## **ARE THERE ANY RISKS?**

Colonoscopy is a very safe examination, but very rarely problems can occur. The two most important are:

- **Perforation** – this is a tear in the lining of the colon, which can happen during the test. It may not need treating at all, but it may need repairing with surgery, in which case you would need to stay in hospital.
- **Bleeding** – minor bleeding is of no concern. Substantial bleeding can occur up to 10 days after removal of polyps, but is rare. If you are concerned please contact your GP, or the Endoscopy Centre on 020 7908 2181 Monday to Friday 8 am – 8 pm. Out of hours, please ring 020 7486 1234 and ask for the Duty Sister.