

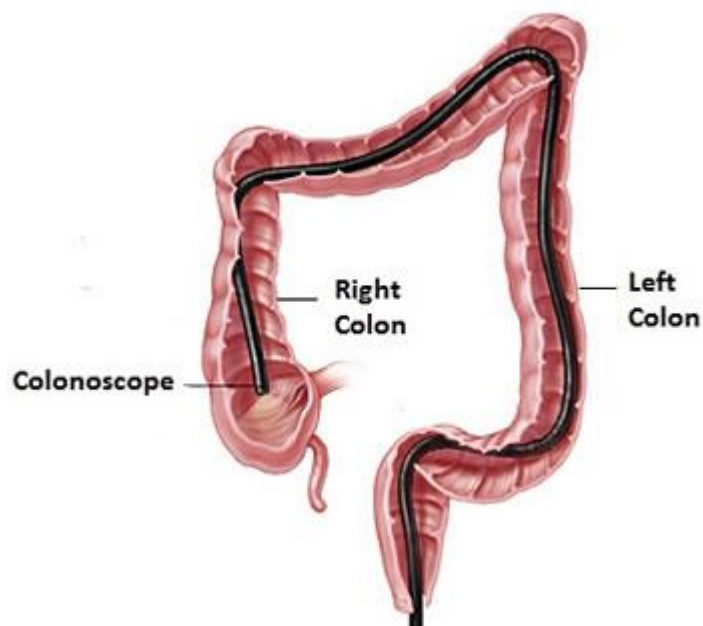
Having a colonoscopy

examination of the large bowel

This leaflet explains more about having a colonoscopy, including the benefits and risks.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a routine test to examine the lining of your bowel, also called the large intestine or colon. This is done using an endoscope, which is a flexible tube, about the thickness of a (little) finger, which has a camera and light at one end. It is passed through the anus (back passage) and carefully moved around the large bowel by a specially trained doctor called an Endoscopist.



Will I have an anaesthetic?

You can choose to have this procedure done with Entonox **and/or** with conscious sedation. Each patient will react differently and may experience different levels of drowsiness. This sedative can have a slightly amnesic effect. Entonox is used to relieve pain during a variety of procedures including childbirth.

The advantages of having Entonox are:

- You can go home immediately after the test.
- You do not need a relative or friend to take you home.
- You will be able to drive yourself home.
- You can return to work.

If you choose to have sedation, **you must arrange for a relative or friend to take you home approximately one - two hours after the test.** This person should be 18

years of age or older. It is recommended that someone stays with you overnight. You will not be able to drive for the next 24 hours and will need to rest quietly at home. **Please note that your appointment will be cancelled on the day if you wish to have sedation but have not organised an escort home.**

If you are unable to arrange someone to collect you, please contact the Endoscopy Unit on **01223 266947**.

Why should I have a colonoscopy?

By looking down the endoscope, your Consultant will be able to get a clear view of the lining of your colon. This will help us to diagnose your symptoms or check any bowel condition that you have had diagnosed in the past. You may have been advised to have a colonoscopy if you have.

- bleeding from your anus
- pain in the lower abdomen (tummy)
- persistent diarrhoea
- changes to your bowel habits
- a strong family history of bowel cancer
- have an existing condition that needs reviewing such as Crohn's disease or colitis.

What are the risks?

Serious complications are extremely rare. Occasionally the endoscope can damage your colon during the test this can cause:

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Perforation of the bowel

If a biopsy is taken or a polyp is removed during the test, you may pass a small amount of blood from your anus after the test. This should only happen up to 12–24 hours after the test and is usually no more than a few teaspoons full.

Please note that occasionally the test may need to be abandoned or may be incomplete. This can happen if you find the procedure too uncomfortable or if the bowel preparation did not empty your bowel completely. In this case, the test may need to be repeated or we may suggest an alternative procedure.

Your Consultant will discuss the possible complications with you before you sign the consent form.

How can I prepare for a colonoscopy?

You will also receive a separate leaflet to explain how to prepare for your colonoscopy with restricted diet and bowel preparation medication. To make sure the Consultant has a clear view of your colon, it must be completely empty. Therefore, you will be asked to follow a special diet for a few days before the procedure.

You will have to take a laxative (substance that speeds bowel movement) before the test.

You will also need to drink more fluids on the day before your colonoscopy.

You should aim to drink a glass of water every hour.

Preparing for your admission

A Pre-assessment nurse may phone you prior to your appointment to discuss:-

- Medical history
- **Current medications including anticoagulant, antiplatelet, antacid, blood pressure tablets and diabetic medications. Please tell your Consultant or inform Endoscopy Team if you are on any of the above medications, as you may need to temporarily stop or alter doses before your procedure**
- Allergies
- Vaccination status and Covid 19 screening test result. You will be asked to bring evidence of your Lateral Flow Test or PCR result.

You will receive a questionnaire (Assessing for your admission). It is important that you complete and return ASAP.

You will receive a Bowel Prep advice sheet/Diet Sheet with the Bowel Prep.

You must continue drinking water until your admission.

On arrival at the Endoscopy Suite a nurse will greet you and complete your admission process, including discussing your medical history, medications, allergies, observations and your transport arrangements.

You will be asked to remove all of your clothing and change into a gown and some dignity disposable shorts and non-slip socks.

You should continue to drink water until your procedure.

Giving my consent (permission)

You will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

You will have an opportunity to ask any further questions.

What happens during a colonoscopy?

The test will take place in the Endoscopy Suite.

You will be given either sedation **and/or** Entonox for the examination.

The sedation will not put you to sleep, but will make you feel drowsy and relaxed. If you decide to have sedation, then a small cannula will be inserted into your arm or hand and you will be given an injection of pain relief and sedation through this.

You will lie on your left side with your knees bent. A nurse will stay with you throughout the examination. The endoscope will be inserted into your lower bowel through your anus. Air will be passed down a channel in the endoscope, expanding your bowel to make it easier to see the lining. This may make you feel slightly bloated and you may feel the urge to go to the toilet, but you will not be able to do this as your bowel will be empty. Many people pass some wind during the test, this is perfectly normal and nothing to be embarrassed about.

If polyps are present your Consultant can remove these. You will not feel this.

When a polyp is particularly big or in a difficult position the removal may be deferred and rebooked.

Sometimes a biopsy (a sample of tissue) will be taken for analysis and sent to the laboratory.

The test usually lasts between 20-40 minutes.

You may have some cramping and brief periods of discomfort when the endoscope is first inserted and when the scope passes around bends in your bowel.

Occasionally the nurse will press gently on your stomach or your position may be altered to aid passage of the scope.
You will not feel anything if biopsies are taken.

What happens after a colonoscopy?

After the procedure you will be transferred back to your room.

The nurse will check your blood pressure and pulse.

If you have had sedation, you will need to rest quietly until the sedative has worn off. You will be able to eat and drink as normal and this will be given to you before you go home.

If you have had sedation, you must have someone to escort you home and stay with you overnight. He/she should be contactable by phone when you are ready to leave.

Please note your appointment will be cancelled on the day if you wish to have sedation but have not organised an escort home. If you are unable to arrange for someone to collect you, please contact the Endoscopy Unit on **01223 266947**.

What do I need to do after I go home?

The sedation lasts longer than you may think and therefore for 24 hours you must not do the following :

- drive or ride a bicycle
- operate machinery or do anything requiring skill or judgement
- drink alcohol
- take sleeping tablets
- go to the work
- make any important decisions, sign contracts or legal documents.

You should rest at home following your procedure.

You should go straight to your nearest A&E department if you develop severe abdominal (tummy) pain, a fever or are vomiting or passing large amounts of blood after the test. (Please take your endoscopy report with you).

When will I get the results?

Your Consultant will contact you with the results of your procedure and discuss if a follow up appointment is required.

Contact us

To change or cancel your appointment please contact

Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital 01223 266900 or **Bookings Dept 01223 266999** or your Consultants secretary direct

If you have any other queries please contact:

The Endoscopy Suite 01223 266947

