



Dorset HealthCare
University
NHS Foundation Trust

Colonoscopy

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

Excellence
Compassion
Expertise

A blue heart-shaped logo containing the text 'Excellence', 'Compassion', and 'Expertise' stacked vertically. 'Excellence' is in yellow, 'Compassion' is in white, and 'Expertise' is in orange.

Introduction

You have been advised by your GP or hospital doctor to have a colonoscopy examination. **We will need to have your formal consent before we can carry out this examination.** This booklet explains how the examination is carried out, and what the risks are. This will help you to make an informed decision when agreeing to the examination and whether you wish to have a sedative. The consent form is included with your admission paperwork. Please read it carefully.

What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test which allows the doctor to look directly at the large bowel (colon). In order to do this test a scope is passed through the back passage. The colonoscope is a long flexible tube about the thickness of your index finger with a bright light on the end. The doctor will get a clear view of the bowel and will be able to check to see if any disease is present. The test should take between 30-45 minutes, although the whole appointment may take around 3 hours.

Privacy and dignity

We appreciate that many people will feel that these tests invade their privacy and are not always very dignified. We make every attempt to preserve your dignity as much as possible during your time in the department.

What preparation is required?

To allow a clear view, the colon must be completely empty of waste material. You will need to avoid some foods and you will be given laxatives to empty the bowel the day before. A separate letter will give you all the instructions regarding the preparation for this test. You will need to stay near a toilet, and we suggest staying home that day.

Can I still take my usual medication?

You should take all your regular medication at the normal times, unless advised otherwise.

If you are on **iron tablets** you will need to stop taking them two weeks before your colonoscopy.

If you are **diabetic** or take **blood thinning** drugs, specific instructions will be given.

If you are taking the **contraceptive pill**, it is advisable to use other contraception methods for 14 days following the examination. Do not stop taking the pill.

On the day

On arrival you will be seen by a member of the nursing staff who will ask you some questions about your medical history. You will also have the opportunity to ask the nurse any questions you may have about the procedure, before signing the consent form confirming your agreement to the test.

Your appointment time is not the actual time you will have your colonoscopy. There may be a short wait on the Day Surgery Unit. This is to allow adequate time for preparation and safety checks, ensuring that our standards are met for each patient. You may wish to bring something to read to help pass the time. Please note there is limited waiting room in the Day Surgery Unit for relatives.

- You may have a **sedative injection** for this procedure, which will make you drowsy but not unconscious
- Or you may have Entonox (gas and air) you will need to stay for 30 minutes after the procedure, then you may carry on as normal.

Following sedation:-

- You will need an adult to take you home and stay with you for 12 hours or overnight. If there is no-one at home we may be able to arrange for you to stay in the hospital
- You will not be able to drive home or take public transport.
- You must not operate machinery, drive or drink alcohol for 24 hours afterwards.

- You must not sign any legal documents for 24 hours afterwards.
- You should be aware that sedation may stay in the body for two to three days and can cause tiredness.

You will be asked to undress and put on a hospital gown. You may find it comfortable to wear warm loose fitting clothing to your appointment, as you may feel slightly bloated with air following your examination.

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A small needle will be inserted into a vein in the back of your hand which will be used to administer the sedation. During the examination, sometimes there may be small lesions or polyps present, which can be removed by using a tiny wire loop. These will be sent for analysis.

The procedure can sometimes be uncomfortable as we look around the bowel and insert some carbon dioxide gas to give us a clear view. We will endeavour to make you as comfortable as possible.

What happens after the test?

You will return to the recovery area, where your condition will be monitored and you will be able to rest. You may feel a little bloated with wind pains but these usually settle quite quickly. When the sedation wears off you will be offered tea and biscuits.

When will I know the results?

In many cases the doctor or nurse will be able to tell you the results of the test as soon as you are awake. However, if a sample (biopsy) has been taken, the results may take 2-6 weeks to come back. It is a good idea to have someone with you when you speak to the doctor or nurse after the procedure, as many people forget what has been said to them due to the sedation. You may need to see your GP afterwards to discuss any biopsy results or necessary treatment.

Going home

Due to the sedation it is essential that someone comes to collect you. Once at home it is important to rest quietly for the remainder of the day. Sedation may last longer than you think so you should not drive a car, operate machinery or drink alcohol for 24 hours. You should have someone to stay with you for 12 hours or overnight following the procedure. However if you only have Entonox for this test none of the above is applicable, as the body returns to normal after 30 minutes. You may eat and drink as normal once the test is over.

Are there any possible complications?

Colonoscopy is commonly performed and is generally a safe procedure.

You may experience the following minor side effects after the examination:

- Abdominal bloating due to trapped air.
- Minor bleeding.

There is a small risk of perforation of the bowel.

Please contact your GP or in an emergency A+E Poole 01202 442202 or 999 if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Heavy bleeding.
- Abdominal pain which gets worse or is more severe than any pain that you had before the test.
- High temperature.

Are there any alternatives to a colonoscopy?

It may be possible for you to have a CT Colonography, however you would need to discuss this with your GP.

Further advice

If you would like any further information or if you experience any problems within the first 24 hours after your appointment please contact:

Day Surgery Unit Swanage Hospital 01929 475008

Admissions office 9- 5 pm 01929 475047

Minor injuries 8- 8 pm 01929 475009

You could also contact your GP

Dorset Out of Hours Medical Service on 111

Poole Hospital A+E 01202 442202 (out of Hours)

Emergency 999

Useful websites

www.patient.co.uk - information on tests and procedures

How to find Swanage Hospital

Swanage Community Hospital

Queens Road

Swanage

Dorset

BH19 2ES

By road: The Sandbanks to Studland chain ferry can be used if you are coming from the Bournemouth and Poole area. On-road parking is available outside the hospital on Queens Road.

By bus: The Bus Depot in the centre of Swanage is the nearest stop, approximately a 10 minute uphill walk to the hospital. A taxi rank is also located at the Bus Depot.

By rail: Wareham station is the nearest mainline service.

The information in this leaflet is available in additional languages and alternative formats. Please contact the Trust for further details.

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