

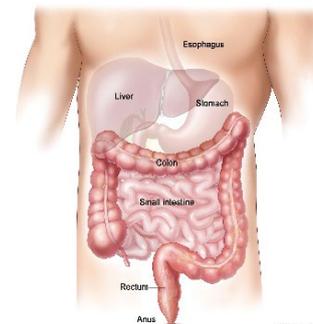
# Colonoscopy Procedure

## Patient Information - Gastroenterology Day Service

Your doctor has determined that further examination of your gastrointestinal tract is necessary to help them diagnose or treat your condition.

This information sheet has been prepared to help you understand the procedure.

**\*Please read it carefully\***



### What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a procedure that allows the doctor to look directly at the lining of the large intestine or colon, to look for any abnormalities using an endoscope (a thin flexible tube about the thickness of your index finger). You can watch a video of a colonoscopy procedure at Christchurch Hospital:

<https://www.healthinfo.org.nz/medicaltests&procedures/colonoscopy>

### What preparation is required?

For this procedure to be successful and allow a clear view of your colon, your bowel must be as empty as possible. If the bowel is not empty, the whole procedure may have to be cancelled and need to be repeated on another occasion.

A pamphlet on how to prepare your bowel correctly will be sent with your appointment letter. Please follow the bowel preparation (prep) instructions carefully. If you have any questions or require this information in another language, please phone us to discuss further.

### What about my current medications?

Please contact us as soon as possible if you have recently started taking:

- **Blood thinning medication** such as Warfarin, Dabigatran, Rivaroxaban OR Clopidogrel, Prasugrel, Dipyridamole or Ticagrelor,
- **Empagliflozin** (Jardiance) or with fixed Metformin dose (Jardiamet)
- **Dapagliflozin** (Forxiga), with Metformin (Xigduo) or with Saxagliptin (Qtern)
- **Carbamazepine** (Tegretol)
- Have a **pacemaker** OR **implanted cardiac defibrillator**.

If you are taking **iron supplements**, please stop these **7 days** before the procedure.

The telephone pre-assessment nurse has determined you need to **temporarily alter the dose OR stop** some of your medications whilst you are taking the bowel preparation. Please carefully read the instructions below and ask your pharmacist to remove the tablets from your blister pack (if relevant). If you are concerned, please discuss with your GP.

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You can re-start this medication as usual, the day **after** the colonoscopy procedure.

Please take all regular medications (**not** listed above), as you normal with a small mouthful of water.

If you are taking an oral contraceptive, extra contraceptive precautions will be required whilst you are taking the bowel preparation and for 7 days after the procedure.

**Please take your regular medication:**

1 hour **before** starting the bowel prep **OR** 1 hour **after** finishing the bowel prep.

This allows time for your medications to be absorbed.

Please bring any **essential** medications such as nitrolingual sprays (GTN), asthma inhalers or diabetic medications with you to your appointment.

If you need advice on how to manage your diabetes before the procedure, please read the pamphlet enclosed '**Diabetes and Endoscopy**'. This information is also available on

[www.healthinfo.co.nz/healthconditions/stomach&bowel/colonoscopy/diabetes&endoscopy](http://www.healthinfo.co.nz/healthconditions/stomach&bowel/colonoscopy/diabetes&endoscopy)

Alternatively, you can contact your GP for advice on how to manage your diabetes before the procedure.

## Where can I park?

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Parking at Christchurch Hospital is limited. Please refer to the enclosed parking information sheet for advice and allow at least 30 mins to get to your appointment.

Information about parking is also available at:

<http://www.cdhb.health.nz/patients-visitors/pages/parking.aspx>

## On arrival:

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**Please report to:** Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit  
2nd floor  
Riverside building  
Christchurch Hospital

The receptionist will check your personal details and a member of the nursing team will check the pre-assessment information with you before the procedure. The nurse will also outline the risks and complications of a colonoscopy, before asking for you to consent to proceed.

## Consent:

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Before the procedure can begin you will need to sign a consent form.

On the day, an endoscopy nurse will discuss the colonoscopy procedure with you and explain the possible complications and side effects. You will be given an opportunity to ask questions, before you are asked to sign the consent form. The endoscopist (doctor) will also ask you if you consent to having the colonoscopy procedure before the procedure starts.

If you later change your mind, you are entitled to withdraw your consent at any stage of the procedure, even after signing the consent form.

## Possible complications

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Most colonoscopies are safe and uncomplicated when undertaken by experienced endoscopists, but as with any procedure there is a small risk of side effects or complications.

Possible complications/risks of a **COLONOSCOPY** are:

- Sedation / medication risks
- Perforation rate less than 1 in 1000
- Perforation rate post polypectomy less than 1 in 500
- Significant bleeding less than 1 in 100, where polypectomy is performed
- Missed significant pathology < 5%
- Incomplete examination may require further imaging

## What will happen during the procedure?

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A mild sedative and some pain relief will be given through a small needle (IV) placed in the back of your hand or arm to help you relax. This will be given at regular intervals throughout the procedure to keep you comfortable. This medication has a mild amnesia-like effect, so you may not remember parts of the procedure.

Oxygen will be given through little tubing that sits in your nose. You will have a small peg-like device clipped on to your finger or ear which will measure your heart rate and oxygen levels.

Once you are lying comfortably on your left side and the sedative medication is starting to take effect, the endoscopist will do a brief rectal examination to check the entrance to your bowel and prostate (*if relevant*) before gently inserting the colonoscope into your back passage and move it around the bowel.

Carbon dioxide and air is used to inflate the bowel so the endoscopist can clearly see all the surfaces. This may be a little uncomfortable and cause a little bloating and or cramping.

You may also feel pressure in your bowel (like you need to go to the toilet). Please do not worry about this, as your bowel will be completely empty after the bowel preparation and any fluid left in the bowel can be suctioned out by the endoscope.

A biopsy (small tissue sample) may be taken during the procedure to be sent to the laboratory for more tests. You will not feel this being done.

Polyps (small growths of tissue) may also be removed during the procedure and you will not feel this being done. This is called a polypectomy. All polyps that are found are removed at the same time, as some polyps may become cancerous over time.

After careful examination of the lining of your bowel, most of the carbon dioxide and air will be suctioned out before the procedure is finished to keep you as comfortable as possible.

## After the procedure

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You will be taken to the recovery area and your blood pressure, heart rate, breathing rate and oxygen levels will be monitored until you are awake. You will then be given something to eat and drink before going home.

A nurse will explain the findings of the colonoscopy procedure to you and give you a copy of the colonoscopy report to take home. This will also contain important information about re-starting blood thinning medications (*if relevant*).

A copy of your colonoscopy report will also be sent to your referring doctor, immediately on completion of the procedure.

## How long will it take?

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Please allow at least **3 hours** for your appointment. We would advise you to bring a book, magazine or iPad with you to help pass the time, as sometimes delays occur due to emergency endoscopy procedures.

You may also listen to music if you bring your own headphones. However, we ask you to keep the volume low, so not to disturb other patients.

The colonoscopy procedure itself takes between 30-45 minutes and if you have not had sedation you will be able to go home immediately after completion of the procedure. If you had sedative medication you will need at least one hour to recover in the endoscopy unit before you can go home.

## When you leave the Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit

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Please make arrangements for someone to pick you up from the *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit*, who can care for you for **24 hours** after the procedure. This is for your own safety and protection. The procedural medication makes you forgetful and can impair your judgement and reflexes.

If you do not have a friend, relative or support person who can do this, please talk to our booking team about your after-care options, when you telephone to confirm your appointment.

Even if you feel alert after the procedure you must not do any of the following for **24 hours**:

- Drive a car
- Operate machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal documents or
- Ride on public transport alone

