

Patient information factsheet

CT colonography (48-hour preparation)

We have given you this factsheet because you have an appointment for a CT colonography scan. Please make sure you read this information and follow the instructions carefully before your procedure. If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of your healthcare team who will be pleased to advise you.

The procedure involves a computerised tomography (CT) scanner taking images of your abdomen and pelvis. These images are cross-sectional (like slices) and are used to produce 2D and 3D images of the large bowel (colon) and back passage (rectum).

Preparation for the procedure

To give us a clear view of any small changes in your bowel, such as polyps, your bowel needs to be carefully prepared over the two days before the procedure.

You will need to:

- drink the Gastrografin we have provided. Gastrografin is a contrast medium (dye) which contains iodine and helps to make your scan pictures clearer. It also acts as a laxative to clear your bowel of faeces (poo).
- follow a low fibre and low fat diet.

Gastrografin may cause diarrhoea, so it is important that you drink plenty of fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated. This may not happen until after the second dose of Gastrografin. Please make sure you are near a toilet once you have started taking your bowel preparation.

Before your appointment (and before taking the Gastrografin)

Please let us know if:

- you suffer with an allergy to iodine.
- you have limited mobility and will require special assistance to get on and off the scanning table. For example, if you will require a hoist.
- you will need an interpreter. We are not able to use family members or friends to interpret.
- there is any possibility that you may be pregnant.

What to bring with you

You may wish to bring your own dressing gown, slippers and reading material.

If you have diabetes

If you are diabetic and need additional advice on how to manage your diabetic medication during the two days of preparation, please contact your diabetic nurse specialist or GP surgery for specific instructions.

During the procedure

- We will explain the test, go through a checklist of questions and answer any questions you may have. We will then ask you to sign a form to say that you have understood this factsheet and that you consent to the procedure.
- If you are a female of child-bearing age, we will ask you to complete a form with the date of your last period and whether there is any possibility that you may be pregnant.
- We will ask you to change into a hospital gown.
- We may insert a small tube (cannula) into a vein in your arm.
- We may give you a muscle relaxant (Buscopan) via the cannula to prevent bowel spasm. This may give you a dry mouth and blurred vision for about 20 minutes.
- We will ask you to lie down on the scanner table on your left side.
- We will then pass a small, flexible tube (no more than 11cm) into your back passage using lubricant gel.
- Carbon dioxide gas will be gently pumped into your bowel through the tube in your back passage from a specially designed machine. You may feel some bloating and mild discomfort in your tummy like 'bad wind'.
- We will take CT scan pictures of you lying on your back, your front and/or your side. Sometimes we may take CT scan pictures of your chest to complete the examination.
- For the first set of pictures, we will usually give you an infusion of x-ray contrast (dye) through the cannula in your arm. A short, hot flush and feeling like you are passing urine (weeing) are common side effects of this contrast.
- We will ask you to hold your breath for about ten seconds each time we take scan pictures.
- When we have completed taking images, the tube will be removed from your back passage.
- We will then show you to the toilet. You may spend as long as you like in the toilet, until you feel more comfortable.
- You will then be able to get dressed.
- We will remove the cannula and offer you a drink and some biscuits.
- The procedure takes around 30 minutes, but please expect to be with us for an hour or so in total.

After the procedure

We will ask you to wait in the department for a short time after the procedure. This is to make sure that you feel well and any abdominal discomfort is getting better before you go home. You may experience some wind and further diarrhoea for the rest of the day. We recommend that you stay close to a toilet. You can eat normally after the procedure and you should drink plenty of fluids.

Risks

- There is some exposure to radiation during the procedure. However, the amount of radiation you will receive is kept to a minimum. The overall radiation risk has been assessed as low.
- The radiation risks are greater to an unborn baby. It is for this reason that we will check that there is no possibility that you are pregnant.
- Some people may have a rare allergic reaction to the x-ray contrast (Iomeprol). We will go through a safety checklist before the procedure to identify if you are at increased risk. A hot flush, feeling of passing urine (weeing) and metallic taste are common side effects of the x-ray contrast.

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Other side effects that may occur include:

- painful, blurred vision of one or both of your eyes. This is a rare side effect from the muscle relaxant (Buscopan). If you experience this, you must attend hospital immediately.
- abdominal discomfort. This should get better as you move around and start to eat.
- damage to the bowel wall. This happens in less than 1 in 3000 tests.
- dehydration. You should drink more fluids.
- a sore bottom from loose stools.

Results

The x-ray pictures that we take will be reviewed by a consultant radiologist. The report will be discussed with you at your follow-up outpatient appointment.

Useful links

www.gov.uk/government/publications/bowel-cancer-screening-having-a-ct-colonography-ctc-scan

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/IPG129

www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer/diagnosis

www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-in-general/tests/ct-colonography

Contact us

We hope that this factsheet will answer some of the questions you may have, but if there is anything you do not understand or is not covered, please speak to a member of your healthcare team who will be happy to explain further.

If you have any questions before the examination, please telephone the radiology department on: **023 8120 6077** or **023 8120 3258** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm).

Bowel preparation and diet

Day	Time	Diet, drink and medications schedule	Completed
Seven days before procedure		Stop taking all iron supplements, but continue other medications.	
Four days before procedure		Stop taking any constipating medicines, such as Lomotil and Imodium (Loperamide), but continue other medications.	
Two days before procedure	Drink as much clear fluid as possible (if required, this can contain sugar).		
	Stop eating items on the 'Foods not allowed' list (enclosed).		
	7 to 9am	Breakfast from the 'Foods allowed' list (enclosed).	
	12 noon	Lunch from the 'Foods allowed' list (enclosed).	
	Do not have any more solid food from now on.		
	You may have clear fluids, strained soup, meat extract, non-dairy ice cream and jelly (this may contain sugar) only.		
	7pm	Drink half the bottle of Gastrografin (50ml). You may mix this with 50ml of water and some squash to taste.	
One day before procedure	Do not eat any solid food.		
	You may have clear fluids, strained soup, meat extract, non-dairy ice cream and jelly (this may contain sugar) only.		
	Drink as much clear liquid as possible. You will need to drink at least 150ml (1/4 pint) of fluid every hour during the daytime, such as water, black coffee, black tea or squash (without red colouring).		
	7pm	Drink the second half of the bottle of Gastrografin (50ml). You may mix this with 50ml of water and some squash to taste.	
On the day of your procedure	Do not eat any food.		
	You may drink as much water or clear fluids as you would like.		
	After the procedure, you will be able to eat and drink as normal.		

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.