

# **COLONOSCOPY**

## **WHAT IS COLONOSCOPY?**

Colonoscopy is a procedure used to inspect the large bowel (colon and rectum) and allows for a variety of operations to be carried out through the colonoscope. These may include taking small tissue samples (biopsy) and removal of polyps (polypectomy).

## **HOW IS THE BOWEL PREPARED?**

In order for the doctor to get the best possible view and make the colonoscopy easier, it is vital that your large bowel is cleaned out of all waste material. You will need to purchase a preparation kit and you will be given written instructions to follow.

This is very important, as the colon needs to be clean to enable a high quality, complete and safe procedure to be performed.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

You should advise us if you are sensitive (allergic) to any drug or other substance, or if you may be pregnant.

You should cease iron tablets 7 days before your colonoscopy. You should inform us if you are taking blood thinning medication, have heart valve disease or have a pacemaker. You will be given special instructions if you are diabetic. Do not take diabetes tablets or insulin the evening before or the morning of the procedure unless instructed to do so. All other regular medications should be continued.

## **WILL I BE GIVEN SEDATION?**

Intravenous sedation is given by the anaesthetist. You will generally have no memory of the procedure.

## **HOW IS COLONOSCOPY DONE?**

The colonoscope is a long and flexible tube inserted via the rectum into the large bowel to allow complete colonic examination.

Any polyps detected during the colonoscopy will be removed as they may be a risk for bowel cancer. These are usually sent for pathology testing.

## **SAFETY AND RISKS**

Complications of colonoscopy are uncommon. The most serious complication is perforation of the bowel wall which usually requires urgent surgical repair and is rarely fatal. Perforation rates are approximately 1 in 1500. This risk is slightly increased if a polyp is removed. Bleeding is also a potential complication of polyp removal.

Rare side effects can occur with any procedure. Death is a remote possibility.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER COLONOSCOPY?**

The sedation may affect your memory for some time afterwards and you may find that you are unable to recall details of any discussion of the procedure. You may feel a little bloated after the procedure but this generally settles after a few hours.

Because of the sedation given, you **MUST NOT** drive a car, operate machinery or make important legal decisions until the following day.

You should contact your doctor or local hospital if you have severe abdominal pain, fever or bowel bleeding.

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