

Patient information factsheet

CT colonography (48-hour preparation)

We have given you this factsheet because you have an appointment for a CT colonography. It explains what a CT colonography is, what it involves and how to prepare for your procedure. Please make sure you read this information and follow the instructions carefully. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team who will be happy to discuss these with you.

What is a CT colonography?

CT colonography is a procedure that 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).

Before your appointment

Please let us know as soon as you receive your appointment letter if:

- you are allergic 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.

Preparation for the procedure

Bowel preparation

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 (see page 4).

You will need to:

- drink the Gastrografin we have provided. Gastrografin is a contrast medium which contains iodine. Contrast mediums help to make scan pictures clearer. Gastrografin 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. You may also wish to wear incontinence pads during this time, especially if your mobility is slower, as bowel motions may be very sudden.

What to bring with you

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

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.
- This procedure could be harmful to an unborn baby, so if you are of childbearing capacity, 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 (hyoscine butylbromide) 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 into your back passage (no more than 11cm) 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 contrast medium 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 medium.
- 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.
- Some people may have a rare allergic reaction to the contrast medium (lomeprol or lohexol). 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 contrast medium.
- A delayed reaction to the contrast medium is a possible, but very rare, side effect. This may cause a rash to appear over the next few days or itching across your whole body. If this happens, call **111** or speak to a pharmacist.
- If you develop shortness of breath, or your throat or face starts to swell, call **999** for an ambulance.

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 (hyoscine butylbromide). If you experience this, **go to your nearest emergency department 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. Please seek advice from your pharmacy.

Results

The CT pictures that we take will be reviewed by a consultant radiologist or reporting radiographer. We will discuss the report with you at your follow-up outpatient appointment.

Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns before the procedure, please contact us.

Radiology department

Telephone: **023 8120 3978** or **023 8120 6077** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm)

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

Bowel preparation and diet

Day	Time	Diet, drink and medications schedule	Completed (please tick)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not have any more solid food from now on. • You may only have clear fluids, strained soup, meat extract, non-dairy ice cream and jelly (this may contain sugar). 		
	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not eat any solid food. • You may only have clear fluids, strained soup, meat extract, non-dairy ice cream and jelly (this may contain sugar). • Drink as much clear fluid 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 		

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**