

## **HAVING A COLONOSCOPY (morning appointment)**

### **WHAT IS A COLONOSCOPY?**

A colonoscopy is performed by passing a thin, flexible tube, called an endoscope, through the back passage and along the large bowel. This allows examination of the large intestine (colon) to see if any disease is present. It may be necessary to take a biopsy (small piece of tissue) for further investigation. This is done painlessly through the tube using tiny forceps. The test should take about 30-45 minutes to complete.

### **WHAT PREPARATION IS REQUIRED?**

It is essential that your bowel is empty for the test so the doctor has a good view of the area. Clearing the bowel requires a change in diet and use of laxatives (Bisacodyl and Picolax). These medicines should be enclosed with this letter, if not, please telephone the Endoscopy Unit as soon as possible.

### ***PLEASE FOLLOW THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY:-***

Unless otherwise instructed

- **Four days before the test**

Stop taking fibre supplements and tablets that can make you constipated (**such as iron tablets**) but continue with all other medication.

- **Two days before the test**

Eat only (low residue) food, ideally from the following list: egg, cheese, white bread, butter, boiled or steamed white fish, boiled chicken, potato (no skin) or Rich Tea biscuits. Drink lots of water and other clear fluids. You must avoid red meat, brown bread, cereal, vegetables, nuts or pure fruit juices.

- **One day before:**

Eat an early breakfast based on clear fluids only such as soup or jelly.

**10 am** Take the Bisacodyl, 2 tablets (2x5mg) and keep drinking plenty of clear fluids.

**10 am** Take first sachet of Picolax. Dissolve contents of one sachet in 50mls of water in a jug- the mixture will fizz and may become hot. Allow the mixture to cool, add some cold water and drink. Continue to drink plenty of clear fluids, such as tea, coffee, squash, fizzy drinks, water, jelly and clear soups. You may have a small amount of milk in tea or coffee.

Eat lunch based on clear fluids only such as soup or jelly.

**4 pm** Take the second sachet of Picolax. Prepared in the same way as the first. It is important to drink plenty of clear fluid after taking the preparation.

You will have frequent bowel movements and diarrhoea in the afternoon or evening. For this reason, it is best to stay at home near a lavatory. Some gripey stomach pain is normal. You may wish to use some Vaseline or Zinc and Castor Cream to stop your bottom getting sore.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO DRINK AT LEAST 2 LITRES OF CLEAR FLUID AFTER EACH SACHET OF PICOLAX TO ENSURE THE BOWEL IS PROPERLY CLEAN and TO AVOID DEHYDRATION. IF IT IS NOT CLEAN ENOUGH, THE TEST MAY HAVE TO BE REPEATED AT A LATER DATE.**

- **On the day of your test**

You must not eat any solid food today, but can drink clear fluids until you arrive in the Endoscopy Unit. **If you are having an endoscopy (also known as an OGD and Gastroscopy) on the same day as your colonoscopy you should stop drinking all fluids 4 hours prior to admission.**

***SPECIAL CONSIDERATION:***

If you are currently taking **WARFARIN** or **blood thinning tablets such as Clopidogrel, Prasugrel, Ticagrelor, Rivaroxaban or Dabigatran** or **Apixaban** please contact the Dr Pollok's secretary at least one week before your appointment, as your Warfarin levels may need to be adjusted before we can do the test, or tablets stopped.

If you are currently taking **IRON TABLETS**, please **stop taking them one week before** your appointment.

If you are an **INSULIN DEPENDENT DIABETIC**, please inform Dr Pollok's secretary at least one week in advance as an early morning appointment may be preferable. Please do not eat breakfast or take your Insulin on the morning of the test. It is advisable to bring your Insulin and some food with you to the unit, as they may be required after the test. You may however, take a sugary drink if your blood sugar levels are low.

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE AT THE HOSPITAL?**

Please report to the reception desk. You will be guided to the Endoscopy area and admitted by one of the nurses. The nurse will take your medical details to ensure you are correctly prepared and you can ask any questions you may have about the test. You will be asked to remove the bottom half of your clothing and given a hospital gown to put on. You may prefer to bring a dressing gown from home.

**WILL I BE ASLEEP DURING THE TEST?**

At the start of this test you can be given a sedative injection with a drug similar to Valium, if you wish. This will make you sleepy and relaxed but not usually unconscious. You can also be given a Pethidine injection, which helps to reduce any discomfort you may feel. You can choose how much sedation to have, and do not have to have any unless you want it.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE TEST?**

Once the test is finished you will need to stay in the recovery area for about one hour to wake up. For 24 hours after the test, you must not drink alcohol, drive or sign any legally binding documents. **YOU MUST BE ESCORTED HOME.** Because of the drugs used for sedation it is quite common to have no memory of the test. You may have a full feeling in your bowel after the test but this will go as you pass wind. Once home, you should rest and have someone to look after you if possible.

If you have not had sedation you can leave the Endoscopy Unit as soon as you feel ready and do not need to be escorted home.

After the test, we will tell you as much as we can about the findings. Sometimes we cannot give you a definite answer on the day, as we need to wait for laboratory findings. All results will be sent to your GP or referring doctor.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS INVOLVED IN HAVING A COLONOSCOPY?

Before you agree to have a colonoscopy we need to be sure that you know why you are having it, the alternatives available and the problems that can occur. No treatment or test is totally risk-free, but routine colonoscopy is extremely safe.

There is a slightly increased risk of complications if endoscopic treatment is required, for example if there are polyps to be removed. However, the risk is far less than for other methods of treatment, such as invasive surgery. Please talk to Dr Pollok or the nurse in the Endoscopy Unit if you need further information before deciding whether to agree to the test. Below is a summary of the main complications that sometimes occur.

- **Bleeding** can occasionally occur after a biopsy has been taken or a polyp removed. A small amount of bleeding is normal, but if you should notice tarry, black stools or a large amount of fresh blood you should telephone the Endoscopy Unit or contact Dr Pollok or his secretary. Outside hours you should ring your GP immediately, go to your local Accident & Emergency Department or contact Dr Pollok or one of his team.
- **Perforation.** Is very rare (a tear or hole in the bowel). If this happens you may need to be admitted to hospital for observation.
- **Sedation** poses a small risk, particularly to the elderly or those with breathing or heart difficulties. To reduce the risk you will be given oxygen and a nurse will monitor your breathing, heart rate and general condition throughout the test and during recovery.

## FOLLOW-UP

A follow-up outpatient appointment with Dr Pollok will usually be required and can be arranged on the day of your colonoscopy.

## INFORMED CONSENT

### *Why do we need your informed consent?*

You have the right to refuse any test or treatment if you are not sure that it is the best option for you. You can only make a sensible decision if you are fully informed.

### *What does this mean?*

Your doctor will have told you about the test, possible alternatives and any major risks, so that you can decide for yourself whether or not you want to have this test. The information on these sheets should also help you. Before signing the consent form, you should be sure that you have been given all the information you need. Please feel free to discuss any aspect of the test with the nursing staff or Dr Pollok in the Endoscopy Unit. If you decide to go ahead, you can change your mind at any time.

### *The Consent Form.*

You will be asked to sign a consent form on the day of the procedure. We must be sure that you agree with what is being planned for you. You must be able to show you understand and give informed consent before we do the test. Please bring this document with you on the day of the test.

### **Checklist: Please complete before leaving home for the appointment.**

- [1] I have read and understood the attached information sheets.
- [2] List of current medications.
- [3] The contact details of the person accompanying me home (name/tel number).