

Colonoscopy

This information is for patients having a colonoscopy, and aims to summarise what a colonoscopy is, why they are performed and what the recovery period looks like.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is an examination of the colon, during which a flexible tube with a tiny camera attached inspects the anal canal, rectum, large bowel, and lower end of the small intestine.

Why is a colonoscopy performed?

A colonoscopy may be recommended for several reasons, including:

- To investigate and identify the cause of intestinal symptoms such as abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, or a change in bowel habits.
- To screen for colorectal cancer or polyp surveillance.
- To investigate for inflammatory bowel disease, diverticular disease or other colonic or rectal problems.

How do I prepare for a colonoscopy?

Bowel preparation is essential for an accurate colonoscopy, and involves a change in diet, taking a laxative to remove the bowel contents and increasing your fluid intake. Bowel preparation is necessary to clear out the bowel so that it is clear of any material to allow for the best possible inspection of the colon. Please refer to the documents attached regarding instructions for bowel preparation and consuming a low-fibre, white diet.

What does the recovery period look like following a colonoscopy?

Typically, a colonoscopy has a short recovery period of 24-48 hours, after which you should feel well enough to return to regular activities. It is important to remember, however, that recovery looks different for everyone, and you may feel that you need more time.

You may feel bloated or have wind cramps for up to one day after your procedure. Gentle walking may help to relieve this. Passing excessive wind at this stage is normal.

In the period of 24-48 hours after your procedure you should:

- Avoid heavy lifting or strenuous activity
- Drink plenty of liquids and eat high-fibre foods.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery.
- Ensure someone you trust is available to assist you.
- You can return to a regular diet and increase your fibre and fluid intake.

Contact the rooms if you experience any of the following:

- Severe abdominal cramps
- A firm bloated abdomen
- Vomiting
- Fever or chills
- Rectal bleeding (greater than a tablespoon). It is normal to experience small quantities of blood in the first stool after a polyp excision.

If you have any queries whatsoever, please do not hesitate to call the clinic on 1300 008 883.