



# Computerised Tomography (CT) Colonography

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Version 1

## **About this leaflet**

This leaflet provides information about what to expect when you come to NHS Golden Jubilee for your Computerised Tomography (CT) Colonography procedure.

## **What is CT Colonography?**

CT Colonography is a test that uses a CT scanner to produce images of the large bowel (colon and rectum).

### **What is involved in CT Colonography?**

During the test, the team will inflate your bowel with gas through a thin flexible tube placed in your rectum. We will then take scans with you lying on your back, and repeat this with you lying on your front.

The team can then look at the scans for polyps (small growths) and potential signs of cancer.

### **What preparation is required before the test?**

To give us a clear view, your bowel must be totally clear before the test.

We call this bowel preparation and we will give you Gastrografin to take before the test.

Gastrografin is a mild laxative, which will remove most stool, but also helps us distinguish stool from polyps.

You will need to follow strict instructions regarding the Gastrografin, and your diet, or the test may fail and may need to be repeated.

These instructions can be found at the end of this booklet.

### **Where will the test take place?**

The test will take place at NHS Golden Jubilee in the CT Scanner Room in the Radiology or Imaging Department.

## During the test

The radiographer will explain the test and answer any questions you have. Please let them know if you have had any problems with your bowel preparation, and if you have any of the following:

- diabetes
- asthma
- kidney disease
- glaucoma
- prostates
- angina or other heart problems
- any allergies, especially to x-ray contrast injections.

The test only takes around 20 -30 minutes, but you may be in the department for between 1-2 hours.

When getting your test, you should expect the following to happen.

- We will place a needle into a vein in your arm.
- We will ask you to lie on the scanner table on your left side, and the radiographer will place a short flexible tube into your rectum.
- We may give you a muscle relaxant to avoid bowel spasm.
- We will gently introduce gas (Carbon Dioxide) into your bowel through the tube, at a controlled rate by a machine. You may feel some discomfort and bloating in your stomach.
- Once the radiographer is satisfied with the amount of gas in your large bowel, they will give you an injection of iodine-based contrast through the needle in your arm. This may give you a warm flushing sensation but this only lasts a few seconds.
- You will lie on your back for the first scan, and we will then ask you to turn on to your front for a second scan. Each scan only lasts around 20 seconds.
- We will then remove the tube, but we will ask you to stay in the department for 15-20 minutes before going home. You may eat and drink normally once the test is completed.

### When will I know the result?

Results of your scan will be sent back to the requester at the hospital once complete.

## Risks

CT Colonography is regarded as a very safe test. Very rarely, problems can occur, but if they do, they are similar to any that could happen with other methods of examining the bowel. Risks include:

- Abdominal discomfort
- Feeling faint or similar reactions
- Reaction to the injected contrast
- Damage to the bowel wall (a small tear in the lining, very rare, fewer than 1 in 3,000 tests, and usually not serious)
- Blurry eyes (from the muscle relaxant)
- This test uses X-rays, but these are kept to the minimum
- There is a slight risk from the muscle relaxant (Buscopan) to patients with closed angle glaucoma, heart problems or prostate problems

Your doctor has recommended this test because they feel that the benefits are greater than the risk of not having the test, however, we cannot guarantee that this test will detect all abnormalities in the bowel.

## Precautions

You should continue to take any medication as normal. If you have a colostomy, or could be pregnant, please call us for advice on the number on your appointment letter.

If you are diabetic, we can arrange an early morning appointment. You may need to discuss your diabetes management during bowel preparation with your GP, hospital doctor or your diabetic team.

**Do not start your bowel preparation before you have done this.**

## Important instructions about your bowel preparation

To give us a clear view of the bowel lining, your bowel has to be cleared of stool before the test. You must use the following instructions carefully, or the test may need to be repeated.

You should expect to have frequent loose motions (like diarrhoea) after taking the Gastrografin so stay close to a toilet.

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