If you are unable to keep your appointment, please telephone the Waiting List Office on 0161 746 2741 as soon as possible. Your appointment can then be offered to someone else which helps to keep waiting lists shorter.
Introduction

Your doctor has advised you to have a test called a colonoscopy. This booklet has been written to inform you about the test and to answer the most frequently asked questions. (If there is anything else you feel should be included, please let a member of staff know during your visit).

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test to look at the inside of your large bowel (colon).

This is done using an endoscope that has a thin flexible tube, about the width of a finger, which is passed into your back passage. The test will be carried out by a doctor or specialist nurse, called an endoscopist.

Why do I need the test?

Your symptoms may be caused by a problem in your large bowel. The test will help your doctor to find any problems and then plan your treatment.

Preparation for the test

To allow clear views of your bowel, it must be as clean as possible. The bowel can be cleaned by using the laxative which you should have collected from the hospital pharmacy when your test was ordered.

Note: If you haven’t got the laxative, please take your prescription to the pharmacy department at Trafford General Hospital where you will be able to obtain the medicine free of charge. Alternatively, you may wish to purchase the laxative over the counter from a community pharmacy (There will be a charge for this). Please aim to obtain this laxative in good time to avoid delays to the procedure.

With your appointment letter, you should have received a leaflet explaining how to take the laxative and about restrictions to eating and drinking while you take it. Here are some important points to remember:

- Please ensure that you have received the correct morning or afternoon leaflet according to the time of your appointment.
- It is important that you carefully follow the instructions given to make sure your bowel is clean.
- The bowel preparation leaflet will also include advice on eating and drinking. You must not have anything to eat after the time stated in the leaflet and you must not drink anything within 2 hours of your appointment time.
- You must start your bowel preparation at least by the times stated. If you would like more time to drink it, you may start it sooner. However, please remember that you shouldn’t eat anything for at least an hour before you do this.

If you are worried about taking the medicine, you must contact us straight away.
What about my medication?

If you take iron tablets, or stool bulking agents such as Fybogel, these should be stopped two weeks before your test.

If you take tablets to thin your blood, such as Warfarin or Sinthrome, please contact your anticoagulant clinic and ask them to check your clotting levels within 1 week of your test. The anticoagulant nurse will advise you if your dose needs changing. Do not stop taking it unless you are specifically told to do so.

If you are taking Clopidogrel, you should have been advised at your outpatient appointment whether you should continue or stop taking it prior to your test. If you require further advice, or did not receive this advice, please call (0161) 748 4022 and ask for your consultant’s secretary for advice. If you have any difficulties, please contact the Endoscopy Unit on (0161) 746 2016.

If you are a diabetic treated with insulin or tablets:

• You will need an early morning appointment. If you have been given a later appointment please contact the Waiting List Office on 0161 746 2741 to change it.
• You will need to contact your diabetes specialist (E.g. Diabetes clinic, GP, Practice Nurse) for advice on how to manage your diabetes whilst taking your bowel preparation.
• On the morning of your test do not take your insulin or diabetic tablets. Bring them with you to hospital to take after your test.

Any other medication normally taken in the morning may be taken as follows:

• If your appointment is in the morning, you can either take your medication before 7.00 am or bring it with you to take after your test.
• If your appointment is in the afternoon, take your medication before 10.00 am.

What pain relief is available?

For a Colonoscopy there are two choices:

1. Sedation and a pain relief drug can be given as an injection into a vein in your hand or arm. The sedation will make you quite drowsy but not unconscious. Although drowsy you will still hear what is said to you and you will be able to carry out simple instructions during the test. You will be relaxed and able to breathe quite normally.

Sedation may make you forgetful. Afterwards you may remember very little about the test.

Sedation remains in your blood system for about 24 hours. You must have someone to take you home and look after you for this length of time.

For 24 hours after your test you should NOT:

• Be left alone in the house or look after children
• Drive (You will not be covered by your insurance if you have an accident).
• Return to work.
• Use any kind of machinery, including household appliances.
• Drink alcohol.
• Sign any important documents.
2. **Entonox** can be given through a mouthpiece during your test. Entonox is the gas and air mixture commonly used by women during childbirth - it can help with discomfort during the procedure and will not affect your memory. Following the test, you should be able to carry on with your normal daily life without restrictions.

**How long will I be in hospital?**

Your length of stay can vary, but you should expect to be in the department for up to three hours. If your test and recovery is complete, you may be allowed home sooner.

We will always try to see you at your appointment time. However, please note that there are several factors that may cause unavoidable delays. For example, if we find a treatable condition during a procedure, we will carry out this treatment at the time. This may result in that test taking longer than the allocated time slot resulting in delays for other patients, but we think you will agree that this is a necessary delay. We may also need to see emergency patients which are brought from the wards on to the unit through the hospital link corridor at the rear of the unit.

**Do I need to bring anything with me?**

Please bring:
- A dressing gown and slippers, if you have them.
- A copy of your most recent prescription or a list of your medication.
- If you need to take any medication following your test, you may also bring these with you.

**Visitors**

The Endoscopy Unit is a very busy ward and to ensure the privacy and dignity of all our patients we are unable to accommodate friends and relatives in the treatment area. However, staff may assess your circumstances and make exceptions where necessary. For example:
- The patient concerned has special needs
- The patient is under the age of 16
- The patient requires support with communication needs (Please note that friends and relatives are not allowed to interpret for patients. If an interpreter is required, please inform Waiting List on 0161 746 2741)

During your test, friends and relatives may wait in reception, visit the restaurant or go home for a while depending on your expected length of stay. If necessary, staff will contact them by phone when you are ready to be escorted home.

If you would like to discuss your needs before arrival, please telephone the Endoscopy Unit on 0161 746 2016.
What happens when I arrive?

When you arrive on the Endoscopy Unit a nurse will look after you throughout your stay:

- Your personal details will be checked.
- You will be asked some questions about your general health.
- Your blood pressure, pulse and oxygen level will be recorded.
- Your test will be explained and your questions answered.
- Arrangements for going home and aftercare will be checked.
- You will be asked to give your consent to the test and sign a consent form, if you haven’t already done so.
- You will be shown to a changing room and asked to undress and put on a hospital gown.

**Patient Dignity:** In order to maintain your dignity at all times, disposable privacy pants are available to wear beneath your hospital gown – please ask if you require these. You may also wear your dressing gown and slippers if you have them with you.
- If you wish to have sedation, a needle will be inserted into the back of your hand or arm. The needle will be removed and a soft plastic tube left in place. This will be used to give your sedation.
- If you are a diabetic your blood sugar level will be checked.
- If you are taking tablets to thin your blood, we will check the result of your most recent blood test. Occasionally, we may need to take another sample to make sure it is safe to carry out your test.

Before the test

The endoscopist will make sure you understand the test and that you have signed your consent form.

What happens during the test?

- You will be asked to lie down on your left hand side.
- A probe will be clipped on to your finger to monitor your breathing and heart rate.
- Your sedation, or instructions on how to use Entonox, will be given just before the test starts.
- The flexible tube is passed into your back passage.
- Air is gently blown inside to expand your bowel to allow good views.
- During the test, we may take internal photographs. These images are only used for medical purposes. Your privacy will be respected.
- Tiny samples of tissue may be taken and small polyps (fleshy overgrowths of tissue, usually on a stalk) may be removed. This is painless.
- Anything unusual, which we can treat during your test, will be treated unless you ask us not to before the test begins.
- Normally the test will take about 30 minutes. At the end of your test the flexible tube is easily removed.
After your test

- You will be able to rest in the recovery area.
- You will be monitored by the nurses until you are fully recovered.
- You may feel a little bloated with wind. This should settle quickly.
- When you feel sufficiently recovered, you will be offered a drink and a biscuit.
- A nurse will talk to you about the findings of your test and any follow-up. You will also be given written information about this. If we have taken biopsies (samples) during your test, you will be informed of the results either at a future out-patient appointment or by letter.
- Again, you will be able to ask any questions you have.
- If you have had sedation, you must have someone to take you home and look after you for 24 hours. We will contact this person for you when you are ready to go home.

After you have left the unit

Problems following a colonoscopy are unusual.
- You may feel some bloating or cramp like pain. This should settle by the evening.
- You may see a little blood when you go to the toilet. This is quite normal if tissue samples have been taken or polyps have been removed.

If you have severe pain or bleeding after your test, you should contact your GP and inform them that you have had a colonoscopy. If you can not contact your doctor, or if your symptoms continue or get worse, you should go to your nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

What are the benefits of having the test?

The test will give us the information we need to treat your condition. If we find anything unusual, we may be able to treat it during your test.

What are the possible risks or complications of having this test?

The test is usually very safe. Problems may include:
- Failure to complete the test. The colon has a number of bends and it is not always possible to pass the scope around them.
- Changes in your heart rate and breathing caused by the sedation or the test itself.
- Bleeding, or a hole in the gut wall, caused by:
  - irritation of the lining of the gut by the endoscope
  - taking samples of tissue
  - other treatments carried out during your test.

If this happens, you may need to stay in hospital for observation or an operation to repair the damage.

In large surveys, the risk of complications is less than 1 in 1,700 tests. The risk is increased to 1 in 700 if a polyp is removed.
What are the discomforts of the test?

Some patients experience discomfort during the test. This may be caused by the flexible tube and air being passed inside. This is rarely distressing enough to stop the test. We remove as much air as possible when the test is complete.

Although it is in your best interests that we complete the test, if you feel that you are unable to tolerate it please inform the doctor or nurses looking after you and the test will be stopped.

Is there an alternative test?

There are a number of tests that can be used to look at your lower bowel. These include:

- **Barium Enema** – a white liquid is introduced into the back passage that outlines the bowel. X-ray pictures are then taken.
- **CT Scan** – this is a special X-Ray where a scanner takes many pictures of the abdomen in sections or ‘slices’.
- **CT Colonography** (also known as Virtual Colonography) – in this test pictures of the bowel are obtained from a CT scanner. However, this test involves much more preparation than a standard CT scan. You would need to take laxatives the day before the test and air is pumped in through the back passage to stretch out the bowel.

All of these tests have a particular role in the medical investigation of the lower bowel. Your doctor will have explained to you why a colonoscopy is thought to be best in your situation.

What will happen if I don’t have the test?

This will vary depending on your individual circumstances. However, if you do not have the test your doctor may not be able to find the cause of your symptoms. Should you have any questions about this, please speak to your doctor.

If I have any further questions about the test, who should I contact?

If you have any worries about your test, you can talk to your doctor beforehand or contact the Endoscopy unit on 0161 746 2016, Monday to Friday 8.00 am-6.00 pm.

Further information can also be obtained via our website at www.cmft.nhs.uk/trafford-hospitals/our-services/endoscopy.aspx or from www.nhs.uk.

Please make sure you fully understand the test and any possible treatments before signing your consent form. You may ask questions about anything you are unsure of.
Check list

• Are you able to keep your appointment? If not have you phoned the Waiting List Office on 0161 746 2741 to cancel or change it?

• Are you worried or do you have any questions to ask? You can talk to your doctor or ring the Endoscopy Unit on 0161 746 2016.

• Have you taken your bowel preparation?

• If you are having sedation, have you arranged for an adult to take you home and look after you for 24 hours?

• If you are taking anticoagulants, such as Warfarin or Sinthrome, have you been in touch with your anticoagulant clinic to have your clotting level checked within one week of your appointment?

• If you are a diabetic treated with Insulin or tablets:
  ▪ Have you got an early morning appointment? If not, please ring 0161 746 2741.
  ▪ Have you contacted your diabetes clinic for advice on managing your diabetes whilst taking your bowel preparation?

General Information

• Our aim is for you to be seen as quickly as possible. However, the unit is very busy and if emergencies occur these will naturally be given priority over less urgent cases, therefore your examination may be delayed.

• Do not bring valuables to the hospital. We cannot be responsible for loss or damage to personal property.

How to Get Here

The hospital is situated on Moorside Road in Davyhulme.

Parking is available at the front of the hospital and there are a few parking places at the front of the Endoscopy Unit. Parking is free of charge for the first three hours. Please note vehicles found illegally parked within the hospital grounds may be wheel clamped and subject to a release fee.

Several buses serve the hospital. For up to date information on these bus routes, contact Transport for Greater Manchester on 0871 200 2233 or visit www.tfgm.com

For more information, visit www.cmft.nhs.uk/trafford-hospitals.aspx and click on ‘Plan Your Visit’.
No Smoking Policy

The NHS has a responsibility for the nation’s health. Protect yourself, patients, visitors and staff by adhering to our no smoking policy. Smoking is not permitted within any of our hospital buildings or grounds.

You can contact the Trafford Stop Smoking Service on 0300 456 2400 or by e-mail at stopsmoking.TRAFFORD@NHS.NET. For some great information go to: www.nhs.uk/livewell/smoking

Translation and Interpretation Service

It is our policy that family, relatives or friends cannot interpret for patients. Should you require an interpreter ask a member of staff to arrange it for you.

These translations say “If you require an interpreter, or translation, please ask a member of our staff to arrange it for you.” The languages translated, in order, are: Arabic, Urdu, Bengali, Polish, Somali and simplified Chinese.

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