

South Infirmery-Victoria University Hospital – Endoscopy Unit

Patient Information for Colonoscopy Mr. Ireland & Mr. O'Brien

Before your appointment

- Please follow the enclosed bowel preparation instructions carefully. Your bowel must be completely empty to allow the doctor to have a clear view.
- Stop taking iron tablets seven days before the procedure. All other medication (including aspirin) should be taken as normal. Bring a list of your medications to hospital with you
- No sweetcorn is allowed 1 week prior to procedure
- Arrange to buy the preparation Picolax from your Pharmacist. This medication is only available on prescription and is not available on medical card. You will get a prescription from the hospital.
- If you have any questions about the procedure or find that you cannot keep this appointment, please contact the Admissions Office between 8:00 and 17:00 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday on 021-4926322
- Please contact the Admissions Department to advise them if you are Diabetic alternative arrangements may need to be made for your admission.
- Don't use dentafix on day of procedure

On the day before your procedure

- Have a light breakfast but no milk is allowed at 8:00 a.m.
- If afternoon scope only a cup of tea no milk allowed at 8.00 a.m.
- Take one sachet of Picolax (dissolve in a cup of water, stir for 2-3 minutes and drink at 1:00 p.m.)
- You may drink fluids and you can also have yellow or green jelly
- At 5.00 p.m. take a second sachet of Picolax. You may feel cold while taking this medication
- You can take **FLUIDS ONLY** until midnight. After midnight fast – **NO FOOD OR DRINK**
- Remember, the sachets will give you frequent bowel movements, so be ready for this. Stay at home close to a toilet.

At the hospital

- Bring a dressing gown, slippers and something to read, leave valuables at home
- Don't use Dentafix on day of procedure.
- Please come to Admissions next to the Out-patients Departments.

In the ward

- A nurse will admit you and a doctor will talk to you and ask about your health. If you have any concerns or queries please ask the doctor.
- This doctor will complete the consent process and ask you to complete the consent form.
- You will be asked to remove false teeth and to change into a gown for the procedure and we will ask you to remove any glasses

Getting ready for the procedure

Before the procedure we will give you a sedative (by injection into a vein) to make you feel relaxed and sleepy. The sedative will not put you to sleep We will also give you some pain relief.

The sedative will continue to have a mild effect for up to 24 hours and may leave you unsteady on your feet for a while. You **must** arrange for a responsible adult to take you home and someone to stay for 24 hours. You will not be able to drive yourself. **If you come without having arranged an escort to take you home, we will have to cancel the procedure.**

What is a colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy is an examination of the colon, also called the large bowel or intestine. The procedure involves passing a narrow flexible instrument through the anus (back passage) into the large bowel (colon) to examine the colon lining. This allows us to see if there are any problems such as inflammation or polyps (a polyp is a bit like a wart). The procedure takes about thirty minutes but times vary considerably. If it takes longer, please do not worry. Sometimes it is helpful for diagnosis to take a sample (biopsy) of the lining of the bowel. A small instrument, called forceps, passes through the colonoscope to 'pinch' out a tiny bit of the lining (about the size of a pinhead). This sample is sent to the laboratory for analysis. Most people find this completely painless.

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What happens during the procedure?

We will make you comfortable on a trolley, lying on your left side with your knees bent. For your comfort and reassurance, a theatre nurse will stay with you throughout the procedure.

During the sedative, we will put a plastic 'peg' on your finger to monitor your pulse and oxygen levels. We will also attach you to a monitor. The sedative will make you relaxed and drowsy; it will not put you to sleep. The doctor will then insert the scope through your anus into your colon. During the procedure, air is passed into your colon to give a clear view of its lining. You may experience some wind-like pains, but they should not last long.

At this time, you might feel as if you need to go to the toilet. This is a perfectly natural reaction but as the bowel will be empty there is no need to worry. There may be periods of discomfort as the tube goes around bends in the bowel. If you find the procedure more uncomfortable than you would like, please let the nurse know and we will give you some more sedative or pain relief. In order to make the procedure easier you may be asked to change position (for example roll onto your back). However, if you make it clear that you are too uncomfortable we will stop the procedure.

Are there any side-effects or complications from having a colonoscopy?

Most colonoscopies are done without any problem. The sedative may cause you to feel tired or sleepy for several hours afterwards. You may pass a small amount of blood from your anus if a biopsy was taken, or if polyp was removed. This is normal. Occasionally, the scope may cause damage to the colon. This may cause bleeding, infection and, rarely, perforation (1 in 1,500). If any of the following occur within 48 hours after a colonoscopy, consult a doctor immediately:

- Abdominal pain. (In particular if it becomes gradually worse, and is different or more intense to any 'usual' pains that you may have.)
- Fever (raised temperature).

- Passing a lot of blood from you anus

Bleeding may occur, the risk of this increases to 1 in 40 if you have a polyp removed.

After the procedure

Following the colonoscopy, we will take you to a recovery area, while the sedation wears off.

When you are sufficiently awake, we will give you a drink before you get dressed. You can then go home; usually 2 hours following the procedure. We advise you not to drive, operate machinery, return to work, drink alcohol or sign any legally binding documents for a 24 hour period after the procedure. We also advise you to have a responsible adult stay with you for the next 12 hours. You can eat and drink as normal.

You may feel bloated and have some wind-like pains if some of the air remains in your bowel; these usually settle down quickly.

If you experience any of the following severe pain

- black tarry stools
- persistent bleeding

contact your GP or the hospital 021-4926100

When will I know the result?

The doctor will give you some results of the visual inspection of the bowel before you go home. Final results from biopsies or polyp removals will be given to you either by the Consultant or General Practitioner who requested the procedure at a clinic appointment or by letter. These results can take several weeks to come through, contact us if you do not have the results in 2 months.

In some cases, further investigations may be arranged such as a Barium Enema or a Computerised Tomography (CT) colon scan.