

South Infirmary-Victoria University Hospital – Endoscopy Unit

Patient Information for Colonoscopy for Ms. O’Hanlon

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.
- Arrange to buy the preparation Fleet Phospho-Soda from your Pharmacist. You will have received a prescription from the hospital. This medication is not available on medical card.
- If you have any questions or find that you cannot keep this appointment, please contact Admissions Office between 08:00 a.m. and 17:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday on 021-4926322.

On the day before your procedure

- Take the Fleet Phospho-soda oral solution as per instructions on the box, please follow the 8 a.m. to 12 noon instructions for all appointment times even if booked after 1 p.m.
- You may drink fluids and also have yellow or green jelly. There is no restriction on the amount of clear liquids that may be taken on the day prior to the test, but do not eat food on this day. You may feel cold while taking this medication
- Remember, the solution gives you frequent bowel movements, so be ready for this. Stay at home close to a toilet.
- Do not drink alcohol on the day prior to the procedure
- Please contact the Admissions Department to advise them if you are a Diabetic, as alternative arrangements may need to be made for your admission.

At the hospital

- Bring a dressing gown, slippers and something to read. Leave valuables at home
- Bring a list of your medications to hospital with you

- Don’t use Dentafix on day of procedure
- Please come to the Admissions Department which is located next to the Out-Patients Department

In the ward

- A nurse will admit you and a doctor will come to talk to you and ask questions about your health. If you have any concerns or queries please ask the doctor.
- This doctor will complete the consent process and will ask you to complete the consent form.
- You will be asked to remove false teeth and to change into a gown for the procedure.
- 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 (this is **not** a general anaesthetic). 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. 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, 30 minutes, sometimes a little longer.

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

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(about the size of a pinhead). This sample is sent to the laboratory for analysis. It is also possible to remove polyps in a similar way. Most people find this completely painless.

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.

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 colonoscope 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 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 ‘unusual’ 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; this may be up to 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 overnight. 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 at 021-4926100 for further advice:

When will I know the result?

The doctor may give you some results of the visual inspection of the bowel.

Final results from biopsies or polyp removals will be given to you either by the Consultant or General Practitioner who requested the procedure. These results can take several weeks to come through. Contact us if you have not heard results after 2 months. You should discuss details of these results and any further treatment with your Consultant or your General Practitioner.