

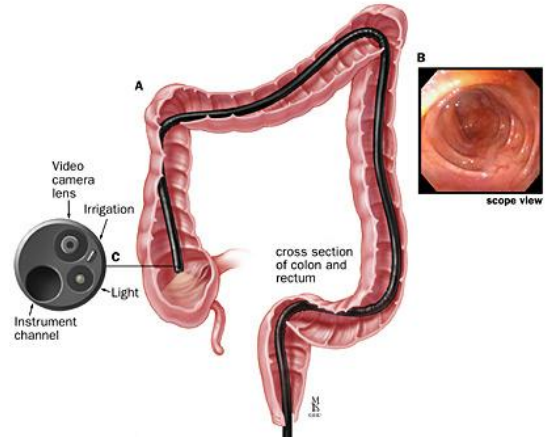


SAINT JAMES
HOSPITAL

COLONOSCOPY PRE-PROCEDURE INFORMATION

What is a colonoscopy?

A Colonoscopy is an examination, whereby a thin, flexible tube with a camera and light at the end is carefully passed through the anus, into the rectum and into the large intestine (colon). This tube is called a Colonoscope and is connected to a screen on which pictures of the insides of the colon can be seen. This allows a Specialist to have a direct look into your colon. This may be a little uncomfortable at times as the colonoscope moves inside your bowel.



In order to make a correct diagnosis, your colon has to be clean and empty. Therefore, it is important to take a laxative preparation that will clean and empty your bowels.

What are the benefits of a colonoscopy?

The main purpose of a colonoscopy is to identify the cause of the symptoms you are experiencing. The Specialist may choose to take biopsies (samples) from the large intestines and send them to the laboratory for further examination, or may even be able to treat the causes during the procedure itself such as in the case of small polyps.

What are the risks of a colonoscopy?

Colonoscopies are considered to be safe, however, as in any other procedure, there are certain associated risks. Rare complications include bleeding or perforations. Other risks include discomfort, bloating and pain. As colonoscopies are done under sedation, you may also experience nausea, vomiting, reduced breathing effort and you may have a prolonged sedative effect. For this reason, you will be carefully monitored throughout the procedure, and also during your recovery period.

Is there an alternative treatment?

The alternative to a Colonoscopy is a barium enema, which is a type of x-ray. However, this does not allow immediate treatment or the possibility of biopsies.

What can I expect on the day of examination?

You are usually asked to come in about an hour ahead of the procedure time for the pre-procedure checks that need to be performed by your Nurse and Doctor.

The Nurse will ask you some routine safety questions and check your blood pressure and pulse. You will then be asked to change your clothing. Your Specialist will discuss the procedure with you and address any queries you may have. You will then be asked to sign a consent form before being accompanied to the Endoscopy Suite. The procedure will be carried out shortly after and it takes approximately 40 minutes; however, you should expect to be with us for a total of 3 to 4 hours to allow for proper recovery.

A small cannula will be inserted in your arm so that you can receive the sedative and the pain relief through it.

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The effects of the sedative may last for up to 24 hours. It is therefore important you **do not operate any heavy machinery, sign any legal documents, drink alcohol or drive for up to 24 hours after the procedure. You will need someone to drive you home** and possibly to be with you overnight following your procedure.

After the procedure, you may feel bloated and experience wind-like discomfort. If a biopsy is taken, or a polyp is removed during the procedure, you may also note small spots of blood from your bottom. This is normal and should subside one or two days after the procedure.

Once you are feeling well enough and have had something to eat and drink, you will be discharged. Your Nurse will provide you with a Discharge Summary note for you to give to your General Practitioner (GP). The results of the Colonoscopy and any other instructions by your Specialist will also be given to you. Any biopsy results will be sent at a later date, once the laboratory has processed them.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

The bowel needs to be clear and empty of all waste materials. You can do this by following the **Pre-Colonoscopy diet** (next page) and taking a **laxative preparation**. This medication will be prescribed on the day of your pre op tests and can be collected from the Inpatient Hospital Pharmacy.

The **laxative preparation** works by giving you diarrhoea. While this may be unpleasant, it is a necessary step. You will require easy access to your toilet for most of the day as the urge to open your bowels after taking the laxative can be quite immediate. You may need a barrier cream, such as petroleum jelly or Vaseline®, to prevent your bottom from becoming sore.

DO NOT TAKE LAXATIVE IF:

- You are allergic to any of the ingredients;
- You are pregnant;
- You are on dialysis;
- You are taking medication for an organ transplant;
- You have not passed wind or opened your bowels in the last five days leading up to your bowel preparation time.

Please inform your Doctor if any of the above apply to you.

Possible side effects

Abdominal pain, abdominal distension, tiredness, feeling generally unwell, soreness of the anus, nausea, vomiting, headache and indigestion.

If you experience any of these symptoms try taking the laxative more slowly.

Allergic reactions to the laxative are very rare, however if you experience a rash or itching, swelling of the face or ankles, palpitations or shortness of breath, **stop taking** the laxative and seek medical advice immediately.

Female patients

If you are taking an oral contraceptive pill, diarrhoea can make it less effective. You are advised to take other precautions in addition to the pill for the rest of that cycle.



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Pre-colonoscopy diet

- **3 days before** the procedure **avoid** consuming fruit that have **peels and seeds**.
- **2 days before** the procedure **follow a low residue diet**, which consists of the following:
 - Cereals – avoid bran and wholemeal
 - White bread or toast
 - Fats (use sparingly) – butter or margarine
 - Eggs
 - Cheese
 - White meat and fish – poultry, fish, shellfish
 - White pasta or noodles
 - White rice
 - Potatoes – no skins, no chips
 - Dessert – clear jelly (not red jelly)
- **Please Avoid** - Red meat, sausage, pies, any fruit or salads, vegetables, potato skins, chips, wholemeal or brown bread, nuts, pulses, baked beans, wholemeal pasta, brown rice, puddings containing fruit and nuts, cakes, biscuits and yoghurts.
- **Do not drink alcohol on the day before and the day of the procedure.**

Should you have any difficulties regarding the above you may call the Endoscopy Department between 08:00 and 17:00 (Monday to Saturday).