Bowel preparation for colonoscopy (with picolax)

Gemini Endoscopy Suite
Tel: 01271 349180

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

This leaflet will answer many of your questions about your colonoscopy. However, if you would like to speak to someone, please contact the Gemini Endoscopy Suite on 01271 349180.

Why is a colonoscopy needed?

This examination allows us to look directly at the colon (large bowel). This means we can check whether any disease is present and will help us find the cause of your symptoms.

What does it involve?

A colonoscope is a thin, flexible tube, with a camera at the end. It is passed through your rectum (back passage) into your colon. There are medications you can choose to help you through your colonoscopy. These include

Sedation: the type of sedation used is called waking sedation. The sedation does not knock you out but will help you to relax during the procedure.

Pain Relief: this can be an injection or gas & air (Entonox).

You may choose to have one or more of these. Some patients choose to have no medications at all.

Sometimes a small amount of tissue (biopsy) may need to be taken from a particular area for further examination in the laboratory. The tissue is removed using tiny forceps passed through the colonoscope. This is usually painless. However, you may feel a tugging sensation. During the test, photographs of your bowel may be taken.
How to find us

The Gemini Endoscopy Suite is located on Level 0 at the North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple.

If you come in through the main hospital entrance, use the lifts or stairs to go down to Level 0. On leaving the lift turn right and head for the link corridor. The corridor forms a ‘crossroad’ - take the right turn and follow the corridor up to a double set of doors, through the doors and the Gemini Endoscopy Suite is on your left. Please press the buzzer to obtain access to the Suite.

If you come in from the Endoscopy Drop-off Zone, go through the blue door and the entrance to the Gemini Endoscopy suite is directly opposite.

Hospital map

Special preparations

If you are on medication to thin your blood, for example Warfarin or Clopidogrel, and this has not been discussed at pre-assessment, please contact the Gemini Endoscopy Suite, as soon as possible, on 01271 349180 before you come into hospital.

If you are diabetic and on medication (insulin or tablets), you may need to adjust your dose. For advice, please contact the Diabetic Liaison Nurse on 01271 322726 or contact the Gemini Endoscopy Suite.

Please follow these steps to prepare for your colonoscopy.

To ensure an empty bowel and a complete examination, please follow our advice carefully.

Five days before colonoscopy

Please avoid granary or multi-seeded bread and crisp breads, and also any cereals containing seeds e.g. Muesli, granola.

If you take iron tablets or medications to control diarrhoea, please stop taking them until after your colonoscopy. You should continue to take any other medications, including laxatives.

Two days before colonoscopy

You may continue to eat as normal until 14.00 (2 pm), then you should stop eating solid food until after your appointment. You should drink plenty of clear fluids (aim for two cups an hour) and try to vary the drinks you take. Clear fluids include water, tea and coffee without milk, carbonated drinks, clear soups and broths made without thickening agents, beer, wine and spirits.
Clear jellies and boiled sweets are allowed too, but avoid red ones as they may stain your bowel! At **18.00 (6 pm)** take 50mls Senna liquid and wash it down with water.

**Permitted fluids**

Below is a list of items that can still be taken after you have stopped eating solid food. They can be taken right up until 2 hours prior to your colonoscopy appointment.

**It is important to drink plenty of clear fluids in addition to the bowel prep. Drinks might include:**

- All types of water
- Lucozade and any other “sports drinks”
- Tea and coffee (little or no milk), this includes fruit and herbal teas
- Fizzy drinks e.g. coke, ginger beer, tonic water
- Clear fruit juice such as apple, cranberry, pomegranate, red and white grape juice.

- **Not orange juice.**

- Any fruit squash
- Hot honey and lemon
- Oxo, Marmite, Bovril
- Consommé/clear soup
- Any sugar based sweets e.g. Jelly Babies, Fruit pastels, Wine gums, Foxes Glacier Fruits and mints, Polo’s. Jellies and dextrose tablets may also be taken.

- **Please do not have milk based drinks such as milkshakes and cappuccino or fruit smoothies.**

**One day before colonoscopy**

Take the first sachet of Picolax at **08.00 (8 am)** and the second sachet at **16.00 (4 pm)**. Please continue to drink plenty of clear fluids but do not eat any food.

**Instructions for taking Picolax**

Dissolve the contents of the sachet in a cup of cold water, it may warm up, but drink it when it has cooled down, followed by a litre of clear fluid over the next two hours. You should experience frequent bowel actions followed by diarrhoea 2 – 3 hours after taking Picolax. You will need to be in close proximity to toilet facilities and you may find it necessary to spend the day at home.
The effects of the bowel preparations may give you a sore bottom. To help prevent this, use a barrier cream e.g. Sudocream, zinc and castor oil or any type of nappy cream. Apply the cream to the appropriate area before starting the bowel preparations. Use moist toilet/baby wipes to clean with. These can also be stored in the fridge to provide a soothing effect if soreness occurs.

**Possible side-effects of preparations**

When taking these preparations, feeling sick, fullness in your stomach, bloating and some intestinal cramping may be experienced. If any of the side-effects become serious, contact the Endoscopy Unit on **01271 349180** or ring your GP for advice.

**PLEASE NOTE** Do not take any other medicine by mouth within one hour of taking Picolax, as it will probably be flushed out before it has time to work.

**The day of the colonoscopy**

On the day of your examination continue to drink clear fluids until 2 hours prior to your colonoscopy. For those 2 hours it is necessary to remain nil by mouth until after your procedure.

**Medication**

It is important that you make us aware if you are taking any of the following medication so that they may decide if bowel preparation is suitable for you to take.

- Diuretics
- Corticosteroids for example Prednisolone
- Lithium
- Digoxin
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines for example Diclofenac
- Tricyclic antidepressants
- Antipsychotic drugs for example Chlorpromazine, Clozapine, Risperidone
- Carbamazepine
- Antiepileptics
- Contraceptives
- Diabetes medications
- Antibiotics
What to bring

Please bring:

- Consent form
- Dressing gown and slippers
- A list of/or any tablets or medicines you are taking
- Your reading glasses

Please do not wear jewellery, make-up or nail varnish for this appointment.

Do not bring any valuables with you, as we cannot take responsibility for any losses.

What will happen during the test?

You will be asked to lie on your left side on the trolley and made as comfortable as possible. A probe will be placed on your finger and a blood pressure cuff put on your arm. This is to monitor your pulse and blood pressure during the procedure, and is routine. A small plastic tube will be placed in to a vein in your arm or hand. This is used to give you a sedative to make you more relaxed and sleepy.

The doctor will then pass the colonoscope gently into your rectum (back passage) and then proceed on to your colon (large bowel). The examination usually takes about 30-40 minutes.

What should I expect after the test?

After the examination, you will be taken to the recovery area, where you will be able to rest and relax. You will feel the need to pass quite a lot of ‘wind’ from your bowels. This may last for about 12 hours and is quite normal after this procedure.

If you have had a biopsy taken (small sample of tissue), you may notice a small amount of blood from your rectum (back passage), either on the toilet paper or in the toilet pan.

What are the possible complications?

This is a safe procedure. Complications such as perforation (a tear of the bowel wall) and bleeding can occur during the procedure, but are very rare. You will be closely checked throughout the test and if there is any cause for concern, the test will be stopped immediately.
When will I be able to go home?

As you will only have had sedation for this examination, you will be able to go home within about 2.5 hours of your appointment time. However, it is imperative that someone comes to pick you up (please do not use public transport). You should be accompanied home by a responsible adult who should stay with you for at least 12 hours if you live alone. If this is not possible, then please contact the Gemini Endoscopy Suite.

Once home, it is important to rest quietly for the rest of the day. You can eat and drink normally. However, you must not drink alcohol, drive, sign legal documents or operate machinery for 24 hours. It is also advisable to take the following day off work.

Useful telephone numbers

- Gemini Endoscopy Suite 01271 349180
- Mr. Cartmell’s secretary 01271 370241
- Mrs. Cross’ Secretary 01271 370285
- Ms Beaton’s Secretary 01271 370241
- Dr Moran’s Secretary 01271 322734
- Dr Davis’s secretary 01271 322447
- Dr Theron’s Secretary 01271 322447
- Colorectal Nurse Specialist 01271 322464

Test results

The results of your test will be sent to your GP. Please make an appointment to see him/her to discuss these.

Further information

If you have any queries or concerns about your Colonoscopy, please do not hesitate to contact the Gemini Endoscopy Suite on 01271 349180.
PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple. Alternatively, it may be possible for us to arrange an appointment in your area.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of the ward staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

‘Patient Opinion’ comments forms are on all wards or online at www.patientopinion.org.uk.