



Western Health
and Social Care Trust

INFORMATION LEAFLET

COLONOSCOPY

Advice before a colonoscopy

**Where to attend: Endoscopy Unit,
South Wing, Altnagelvin**

Bring a list of your medication with you

Expect to be in the Unit for up to 4 hours

For queries contact 028 71296179

Extension 216910 or 216911

Your doctor has requested that you have a Colonoscopy. This leaflet provides information on the procedure and aims to answer questions you may have.

Why do I need a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is carried out to investigate a variety of symptoms:

- Persistent bowel symptoms – diarrhoea, constipation
- Bleeding from the back passage
- Anaemia –may indicate blood loss from the bowel
- Abdominal pain
- It is also used to check for abnormalities in people with a family history of bowel disease or who have had problems previously(eg polyps)

What preparation is needed before the test?

- To clear your bowel, follow the bowel preparation instructions enclosed starting 2 days before your procedure.
- You can drink clear fluids up to 2 hours before your test
- If you are taking **iron tablets** (eg Ferrous sulphate) please stop taking them 7 days before your Colonoscopy.
- If you are taking any of the following drugs please contact the unit on 028 71296179 Ext: 216910/216911.
Plavix (Clopidogrel), Warfarin, Dabigatran (Pradaxa) Rivaroxaban (Xarelto), Apixaban(Eliquis), Ticagrelor (Brilique), Prasugrel (Efient)
- You will be offered Sedation injected into the blood (IV) or Entonox (gas and air) during the procedure. If you have IV sedation someone must be available to drive you home and stay with you for 24 hours.
- If you are the main carer for someone at home please ensure arrangements are made to look after that person.
- Please advise us if you have any allergies or infections

- If you think you may be pregnant do not start your preparation. Contact your GP and inform the unit.

How is a colonoscopy performed?

A nurse will care for you during the procedure and a Doctor or Nurse Specialist will perform the procedure. Following a full explanation, you will be asked to sign a consent form, agreeing to have the procedure. We will answer any questions you may have before starting.

For the procedure you will be asked to lie on your left side with your knees bent. The endoscopist will examine your back passage with a finger. The flexible tube (colonoscope) will be gently inserted into your back passage and around your large bowel.

Air will be passed through the colonoscope to open up your bowel, to give a clear view of the lining. This may give you some crampy discomfort, but this will not last long. You may get the sensation of wanting to go to the toilet, but as your bowel is empty, there is no danger of this happening. You may pass some wind. Although this may be embarrassing, remember the staff do understand what is causing it.

The test will take about 30-45 minutes to complete. If small samples of tissue (biopsies) need to be taken or polyps removed, the test may take longer.

A biopsy is a small piece of tissue, which is removed through the flexible tube using tiny forceps. This procedure is painless and you will not be aware of it being done.

What if I have polyps?

Polyps are growths of tissue on the bowel wall that can vary in size. They are usually benign (not cancers), but if left may progress to cancer. Most polyps can be removed painlessly and completely during the test. If you have a polyp, the endoscopist

will consider whether it should be removed for more careful examination in the laboratory and discuss this with you after the test.

What are the complications of colonoscopy?

As with every medical procedure, the risk must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure. Colonoscopy is what is known as an invasive procedure and therefore carries risk/complication.

- Bleeding from the biopsy site or from where a polyp has been removed (fewer than 1 in every 100 tests carried out). This usually settles on its own.
- A tear or damage to the lining of the bowel - perforation (fewer than 1 in every 1000 tests carried out). The risk is slightly higher if a polyp has been removed. You may need an operation to repair any damage.

After your Procedure

You will be given time to rest and offered a drink and something to eat before discharge. You will receive a patient centred report and discharge information before you leave the department. The staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

If there are any concerns following the procedure please seek advice from our staff on the contact number below.

Helpline number is: 028 71296179
Extension 216910 or 216911

Information contained in this leaflet does not replace professional advice from the healthcare team responsible for your care.

June'18 (V1); Revise June'19