

Having a CT colonography scan

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

What is a colonography scan?

It is a CT scan used to look at your large bowel and abdomen. The scan usually takes about 20-30 minutes, but you should allow an hour for changing and visits to the toilet.

Why is it needed?

The scan specifically looks at the inside of the large bowel. Your doctor will have explained to you why a CT colonography scan is needed.

What does it involve?

The CT scanning staff will explain the test and answer any questions.

- You will be asked to undress and change into gowns.
- You will be helped to fill in questionnaire/s with the CT staff.
- You may have a small tube inserted into one of the veins in your arm.
- You will be asked to lie down on the scanner table on your left side.
- You may be given an injection of muscle relaxant called Buscopan, via the tube in your arm, to decrease bowel spasm.

Please be aware that Buscopan may give you some blurry vision and it is advised that you do not drive for one hour after your scan.

- The radiographer will pass a short, thin, flexible tube into your back passage where carbon dioxide gas will be used to inflate the bowel.
- You may be given an iodine based dye via the tube in your arm which helps us to see other organs in the abdomen.
- During the scan your abdomen may feel bloated and uncomfortable.

- CT scans will be taken with you lying in two positions.
- You will be asked to stay on the bed while the images are looked at. Sometimes another set of pictures is required.
- The tube will be removed from your back passage and you will be shown straight to a toilet.

How long will it take?

The whole procedure will usually take about 30 minutes but the actual scans will only take about 10 minutes.

If you have an injection of dye you will need to remain in the department for half an hour after your scan and in the hospital for a total of an hour after your scan.

Where is it done?

The procedure is done in the Radiology Department. Please report the CT reception in general Outpatients D on arrival.

If you come through the main hospital entrance, take the second corridor on your right (just before the coffee shop). Continue all the way down the corridor and then take a right turn. Take the next left to CT scanner / Outpatients D.

What preparations are needed?

In order to visualize the large bowel clearly, it is important that it is well prepared. You will need to follow a **two-day restricted diet** and take the colourless liquid (Gastrografin), which is enclosed, on the two days before examination. This may act as a laxative and cause you to need the toilet more frequently.

The dietary preparation starts two days before your actual appointment.

Please read the attached two-day patient preparation sheet and follow it carefully.

You may take prescription drugs as normal. Please do not have any iron tablets for 5 days prior to your appointment.

If you have diabetes, please contact the CT Appointments Team on 01271 322741 before starting the diet. Your call may be directed to an answer 'phone, please leave a message.

If you have diabetes and take insulin and/or gliclazide please contact the specialist diabetes nurses for advice regarding your medication.

Tel: 01271 322 726

Monday – Friday, 8am – 5.30pm

How will I feel during the test?

You may feel some sensation of bloating or fullness as the gas is introduced, but this is relieved when the catheter is removed and when you visit the toilet.

Most people experience a hot flush sensation when the dye is injected but this passes off very quickly.

How will I feel afterwards?

You may experience abdominal discomfort due to the gas but this usually passes soon after the scan. It is important to drink plenty of fluids for the following 24 hours.

What happens after the test?

After the test you will be shown to a private toilet where you will be able to make yourself comfortable and get dressed.

You will be offered a hot drink and biscuits and the small tube will be removed from your arm.

If you have an injection of dye, you may expect to be in the department for 1-2 hours and you are advised not to drive for 1 hour after your scan.

If you suffer from prostatic enlargement with urinary retention, you will be asked to urinate before leaving department.

Are there any risks?

As with X-rays, CT scans use radiation but the benefits of the scan are certainly thought to outweigh the risks.

The contrast dye used contains iodine, to which some people are allergic, but we will check this with you before you have your scan.

Buscopan may rarely precipitate acute glaucoma. If you develop a painful eye, you should attend A&E immediately.

There is a small risk of perforation (less than 1 in 3,000). Most of these cases do not develop symptoms or need treatment, but any concerns you may have can be discussed before the procedure starts.

Follow up

The results of your CT colonography scan will be sent to the referring doctor who will arrange a follow up appointment.

Further information

If you have any concerns or questions about your CT colonography scan, please contact the CT appointments on 01271 322741 (Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 11.00am), or speak to one of the CT radiographers on 01271 314130 (Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 4.00pm).

References

Patient Information – CT Colonoscopy Virtual (Pneumocolon), Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust

Preparation for CT Colonography, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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 email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

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Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple
Devon EX31 4JB
Tel. 01271 322577
www.royaldevon.nhs.uk

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