

Colonoscopy Information for patients, whanau and families

This information brochure is for patients having a colonoscopy. It explains what the procedure is, how it is done and provides information about the small chance of side effects or complications as is with any surgical procedure. We have tried to give information to answer your questions. All our colonoscopies are performed at Kensington Hospital in Whangarei. If you cannot find the information in this brochure, please ask your specialist or contact Kensington Hospital.

What is a Colonoscopy?

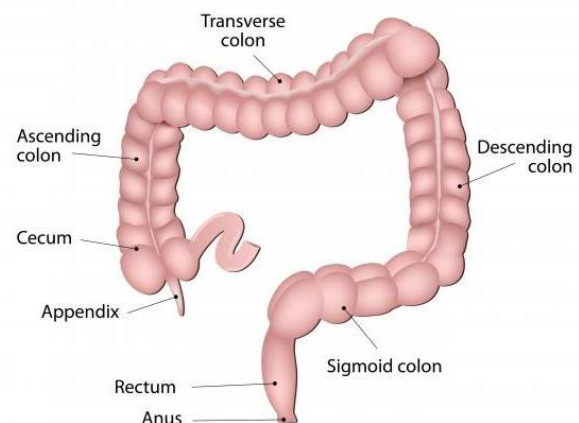
This involves your specialist putting a flexible tube into your anus (bottom) which will be manoeuvred around your lower bowel (colon) and if required possibly into the last part of your small bowel (terminal ileum). There is a small camera on the end of the tube which is used to examine the lining of your bowel, to see if there are any problems.

A small tissue sample may be taken (biopsy) and polyps removed or sampled and sent for testing. If you wish this tissue to be returned for cultural or spiritual reasons you need to let us know before the procedure and be aware this may have been preserved in a toxic chemical (formaldehyde) and be in a plastic container to prevent contamination. If further information is required, do not hesitate to ask.

Why do I need a Colonoscopy?

- Family history of bowel cancer
- Blood and/or mucus in the bowel motion
- Persistent abdominal pain or discomfort
- A repeat procedure for previous problems
- A positive screening test
- Change in bowel habit

These complaints can be caused by a wide variety of disorders, including polyps, inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's and ulcerative colitis), gastrointestinal haemorrhage, colorectal (bowel) cancer.



Preparation for my colonoscopy

It is very important that your bowel is thoroughly emptied so that the lining can be clearly seen. You will need to stop eating some foods for several days before your colonoscopy. You will also need to drink a special bowel cleansing preparation which will make you go to the toilet several times. Separate instructions on diet and bowel preparation will be sent to you by Kensington Hospital. It is important you follow these instructions to ensure optimal visualisation of your colon by the specialist undertaking your colonoscopy. Your specialist may abandon or need to repeat the procedure if stools are still seen in the bowel.

Please take your normal medication with a small amount of water.

If you are taking blood thinning medication such as Warfarin, Ticagrelor (Brilinta), Clopidogrel (Plavix), Dabigatran (Pradaxa) or oral iron tablets, please contact your specialist's rooms as they may need to be stopped 3-5 days prior to your appointment. Please contact your specialist's room a minimum of a week prior to your appointment.

Please bring a list of any medications you are currently taking to Kensington Hospital. It is important you bring with you any inhalers, angina sprays and diabetic medication.

Procedure Room

Your specialist endoscopist will explain the procedure and you will be required to sign a consent form. This confirms that you understand the examination and agree to go ahead. **Please ask any questions you may have.** It is important that you fully understand what is happening.

The procedure is done with a combination of sedative and pain relief which is often administered by an anaesthetist. This could make you feel drowsy and may cause you to forget the procedure. You may experience some discomfort during the procedure. More pain relief/sedation may be given to a maximum safe dose. A nurse will be with you throughout the procedure. The procedure takes approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

After the Colonoscopy

You will return to the recovery area. As you have had sedation you will need to rest for 30 minutes. On recovery you can eat and drink as normal.

The nurse or endoscopist will discuss the result of the examination before you go home and give you a written report. A report will be sent to your GP with the results of any biopsies taken. This may take up to three weeks. You may be required to attend a follow up appointment.

As you have had a sedative you must have a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you for a minimum of six hours. You cannot wait outside for them or catch a taxi or bus alone. You must not drive, drink alcohol, operate machinery or sign important documents for 24 hours after the procedure.

If you develop any severe pain in the neck, chest or abdomen within the next 24 hours after your procedure please contact Kensington Hospital (ph 09 4379080).

What are Polyps and why are they Removed?

Polyps are abnormal growths in the colon lining that are usually benign (not cancer). They grow in different shapes and sizes and sometimes develop into cancer if left untreated. Your endoscopist will remove polyps with wire loops called snares or with biopsy instruments and send them for testing to determine if they are benign or malignant (cancer). Removing polyps is an important way to prevent colorectal (bowel) cancer. Colorectal cancer is cancer that forms in the colon or rectum.

What are the Risks of a Colonoscopy?

Most colonoscopies are safe and uncomplicated. However, as with any procedure there is a small chance of side effects or complications. These range from discomfort and pain during the procedure, bleeding which is usually minor and stops on its own but may require a transfusion or re-intervention, and the small possibility of a perforation (making a hole). This is rare occurring in less than 1:1000 although the risk does go up if interventions are undertaken. This could require an operation with the formation of a stoma (a bag) this may be temporary or permanent and may require removal or repair of part of the bowel. You should also be aware that this examination is not perfect and even with a skilled endoscopist some abnormalities may be missed.

This brochure is intended to provide general advice only. It does not provide definitive medical advice. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your specialist via his rooms (ph 09 4373875), or Kensington Hospital (ph 09 4379080).