

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Gastroenterology - Endoscopy of Colon (Colonoscopy)

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care. When you are waiting for further treatment, it can sometimes feel like a long wait.

The information and advice here is aimed at helping you manage that wait so you arrive for your appointment in the best possible physical and mental health. The NHS has limited resources which means that we are unable to treat you as quickly as we would like. Each healthcare provider has to consider the type of help you need, how quickly you need treatment, the best course of action to help you and when and where you can be seen. The process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. The system of prioritisation is applied consistently across the NHS to help us to decide the order in which patients receive their treatment. This is essential to ensure that we provide care based on need. The system means that care is delivered in the fairest way possible.

Once a referral has been made from primary care to secondary care, the specialist team conduct assessments and then agree with you on the right course of action. At this stage, the urgency will be assessed. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

Guidance for Patients

Your consultant has recommended a colonoscopy. This is a procedure to look at the inside of your colon (large bowel) using a thin flexible camera (endoscope). You will be provided with a patient information leaflet and instructions that detail the procedure and will include how to take the bowel preparation (laxative) beforehand.

The procedure takes around 45 minutes and you will be offered entonox as the procedure can sometimes be uncomfortable. If you decide to have an intravenous light sedative to help you relax you will require an adult to collect you and stay overnight with you following the procedure. You will not be able to drive for 24 hours.

There is helpful information about the procedure, what you can expect and how to prepare for it at www.nhs.uk/conditions/colonoscopy/

If you have not received this information please contact the endoscopy admissions team on 0300 422 6350/6351

We provide these services at both Gloucester Royal Hospital (GRH) and Cheltenham General Hospital (CGH) sites. Information specific to these units can be accessed by using the link www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/our-wards/endoscopy-unit/

Common reasons you have been referred for a colonoscopy:

- Weight loss and persistent abdominal pain
- Rectal bleeding
- Iron deficiency anaemia
- Changes in bowel habit
- Surveillance for conditions such as colonic polyps, inflammatory bowel disease or colorectal cancer
- Family history of colorectal cancer or Lynch Syndrome

You will need to bring a list of medications to your appointment, along with a dressing gown, slippers and bag for your belongings. If you are taking iron tablets or supplements you must stop for 7 days before the procedure.

It is advisable to have a low residue diet for 4-5 days before the test which will help clear the bowel.

Please contact the Endoscopy patient helpline if you have diabetes or are taking any blood thinning medications.

Further information can be found at the following weblink: [Endoscopy \(gloshospitals.nhs.uk\)](http://Endoscopy.gloshospitals.nhs.uk).

Contact number: 0300 422 6350. Please leave a message if the phone is no answered and you will receive a return call within 24 hours. This service is available Monday - Friday 08.00-17.00

Take your medication

If you have been prescribed medication to manage your condition whilst you await treatment, it is important that you follow the instructions from the doctor or pharmacist who has prescribed this.

When taking medication you should always:

- Take it at the right time of the day and the dose recommended by your GP
- Check the instructions, to make sure you are taking it correctly. Some medications should only be taken with a meal, or with water or food.
- Use your own supply and never take medication prescribed for someone else

It is important to let your GP, Pharmacist or Consultant in charge of your care know if you experience any side effects as they may wish to review the dose, or the medications you take.

Before taking any over-the-counter medication or supplements, that you can buy without a prescription, it is important to check with your pharmacist to ensure there is no effect on your prescribed medications.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your symptoms are worsening you can contact your GP or use our endoscopy helpline for advice on 0300 422 6350

There are also resources available at NHS.UK for specific conditions and the following websites which offer useful advice on how to manage symptoms whilst you are waiting for your procedure:

- Crohns and Colitis - crohnsandcolitis.org.uk
- Diverticular disease - NHS.UK or gutscharity.org.uk
- IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) NHS.UK or info@theibsnetwork.org

Urgent Health Advice For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it is not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

Additional Support

Improving your overall health and well being will have a positive effect on your overall health, but will also allow you to recover more quickly and prevent further disease.

The Stop Smoking Service provides a range of options to help you quit including support from an advisor, stop smoking medications, e-cigarettes and a digital offer for those who wish to quit by themselves. If you are not ready to quit just yet but would like more information on how to protect your family, Smoke free Homes, advises on how to make your home and car smoke free.

The Weight Management Service supports adults aged 18 years or over who want to lose weight and have been identified as obese.

Why not download the BEST YOU App on your smart phone



Create goals and track your progress PLUS regularly updated free tips, top advice, easy recipes and much more.

Whether you intend to:

- Increase your activity levels
- Stop smoking
- Reach /maintain a healthy weight
- Reduce the amount of alcohol you drink

...using Best-You is proven to help you achieve your goals.

Contact Us

Please contact the endoscopy helpline on 0300 422 6350 and we will return your call within 24 hours.