

GASTROENTEROLOGY – Colonoscopy

Introduction

We have been working hard to recover elective services as quickly as possible, transforming and integrating services and how we deliver care across Somerset, following our recent merger. 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 in consultation with clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Guidance for Patients

While you are waiting for your procedure your GP/Consultant may have recommended an alternative management or treatment to support your symptoms. It is important that you consider these options too in the short term to support your well-being. But generally, it is important that you stay as healthy as you can both physically and mentally while you wait for your endoscopic procedure.

It is anticipated you will go home on the day of your procedure. Please make arrangements prior to coming into hospital for someone to take you home after. If you have a general anaesthetic, it is essential you arrange for someone to stay with you overnight.

The NHS website has lots of tools and support to help with your general health and fitness. Some useful websites are listed below:

For help and support with losing weight: www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/

For advice on eating well: www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/

For help and support with getting or keeping active: www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/

More locally, Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) have lots of information for adults, children and young people on how to be more active: [Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership - Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership \(sasp.co.uk\)](http://Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership - Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (sasp.co.uk))

For older people Age UK offer a range of activities and exercise classes. You can find out about any classes in your local area on the Age UK website: Age UK | The UK's leading charity helping every older person who needs us

For help and support with quitting smoking: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/

For help and support with drinking less alcohol: www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/

Take your medication

Continue taking your medication while waiting for your surgery, as directed by your GP and hospital specialist. When they contact you, remember to inform the pre-op assessment team of all medicines, vitamins, herbal remedies and supplements you take, so that they can give you clear information on whether you should stop taking your usual medicines before going into hospital.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Managing pain

Some people are in pain or discomfort while they are waiting for a hospital appointment or treatment. You can find help and advice on managing ongoing pain on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/how-to-get-nhs-help-for-your-pain/

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy also has helpful information on managing pain: www.csp.org.uk/public-patient

If your pain is getting worse or you are finding it difficult to cope with, contact your GP or NHS 111.

Good mental health

People sometimes feel worried or anxious before a hospital appointment or treatment. This is perfectly normal. Some people might also find that an existing mental health condition gets worse, so looking after your mental health is just as important as your physical health. You can find helpful links for mental health support on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/mental-health/

Mental health charity Mind also has webpages about COVID-19 and your wellbeing: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing

Talking therapies, or psychological therapies, are effective and confidential treatments delivered by fully trained and accredited NHS practitioners. They can help with common mental health problems like stress, anxiety and depression. You can self refer here: [Online Referral - Talking Therapies - Somerset NHS Foundation Trust \(somersetft.nhs.uk\)](https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/online-referral-talking-therapies)

Patients with caring responsibilities

Waiting for hospital treatment can be a particularly worrying time for patients who are also carers for others, as they need to think also about the loved one they are caring for and make alternative arrangements for them when it is time for them to attend hospital. The Community Council for Somerset is contracted by Somerset County Council to run the Somerset Carers service. There are over 60,000 unpaid carers in Somerset. If you regularly look after someone in an unpaid capacity, Somerset Carers can support you with advice and guidance: www.ccslovesomerset.org/somerset-carers/

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you feel you are becoming more unwell with the symptoms outlined above, please contact your GP or NHS 111 for medical review in the first instance. They will be able to advise if this is something they can support you with during your wait, or they will be able to direct you to the appropriate service to determine a management plan.

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's 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

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

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

Contact Us

If your procedure is planned at Musgrove Park Hospital, please contact:

Email: endoscopyadmissions@somersetft.nhs.uk Telephone: 01823 342400

If your procedure is planned at Yeovil Hospital, please contact:

Endoscopy Booking, telephone 01935 384793