

## Colorectal – Endoscopy of Colon

### Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of the NHS to provide some routine 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.

You don't need to ring your GP, or the hospital caring for you for an update on waiting times because all the information is available on the My Planned Care website.

This guidance has been supported by clinicians who are responsible for your care to support and to help keep you well whilst waiting for your procedure.

### Colorectal – Endoscopy of Colon - Introduction

Your GP/Consultant has recommended a Colonoscopy; a procedure to look at the inside of your colon using a thin, flexible camera (endoscope). This test can help find what's causing your bowel symptoms. You will be provided with a written information leaflet that details specific instructions relating to your colonoscopy and your medications, including the laxative preparation for this.

### Guidance for Patients

Common reasons for having a Colonoscopy include:

Weight loss and 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

While you are waiting for your procedure your GP/Consultant may recommend 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. This may include:

Lifestyle changes

Medication

### How you can support yourself while you wait for your procedure

There are things you can do whilst you wait for your procedure to make you sure you are as healthy and strong as you can be. This will increase your chances of a better recovery. In the time leading up to your procedure, be sure to take good care of yourself by taking a few smart steps. This can help you avoid complications. Follow these simple tips to ensure the best possible outcome and prepare for a successful recovery.

## Take Your Medication

You will be advised to continue with your normal medications, but you may be advised to stop some medications before your procedure, your clinician or pre-operative nurse will provide you with this information.

## What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you feel that there is a change in your condition, please contact your clinical team through the hospital switchboard.

If your condition suddenly worsens whilst you are waiting you should seek advice. Alternatively, you can contact your GP practice. Whilst your GP does not have access to the hospital waiting list to get you seen sooner, if your condition is getting worse, they can assess you, give advice and can contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary.

## Good Mental Health

It is normal to be anxious about having a procedure, relaxation, mindfulness, and breathing exercises can all help. It's important that you ask for help if you feel you need it, and your GP practice can advise you on support in your local area.

Please keep in touch with your GP or mental health professional if you are already under their care for depression or anxiety.

Here you will find some [general information on mental health issues](#) and some [top tips to improve your mental wellbeing](#). Apps to support your health, mental health, and wellbeing:

Find tested and approved mental health apps [here](#).

- [Feeling anxious?](#)
- [Feeling stressed?](#)
- [Feeling low?](#)
- [Trouble sleeping?](#)

If you do experience any of these issues, we recommend getting in touch with your hospital team. The number and email should be on your last hospital appointment letter.

Alternatively, you can contact your GP practice. Whilst your GP does not have access to the hospital waiting list to get you seen sooner, if your condition is getting worse, they can assess you, give advice and can contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary.

If your condition gets worse but you already have your date for surgery, we recommend getting in touch with your hospital team. The number and email for this should be on the hospital appointment letter.

## General information

Please watch this useful [video](#) from the Royal College of Anaesthetists which offers advice on preparing for a procedure.

There is also some useful information available on North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care System for information about [Who we are | North East and North Cumbria ICS](#)