# Colonoscopy

## Introduction

Is a test which allows a doctor to look directly at the lining of the large bowel (the colon). The test involves a colonoscope being carefully passed through the anus in to the large intestine. The colonoscope is a long flexible tube with a light and camera at the tip. The camera transmits images to the monitor allowing the doctors to assess the colon for any abnormalities.

During the test the doctor may take biopsies (a small sample of tissue lining the bowel) for closer examination under the microscope. Polyps can also be removed during colonoscopy, polyps are abnormal growths of tissue which can growth in the lining of the bowel (link to colonic polyp page).

## Preparation

To enable the doctor to have a clear view the colon must be empty of waste material. The bowel preparation comprises of laxatives and increased intake of clear fluids. It is important patients read the bowel preparation instructions in advance to help optimally prepare the bowel.

## The test

The test can be performed with conscious (stay awake) sedation if you wish, in which case you should bring someone to escort you home.

On the day of the test you will be initially seen by the endoscopy staff. The doctor will explain the test to you and at that time you will sign a consent form. At the time of the procedure you may have a cannula (a plastic tube placed into the vein so that medications can be administered) inserted. We will ask you to lie on your left hand side in a comfortable position. The doctor will pass the colonoscope through the anus to the rectum and then advance it through the colon. Often during the procedure you will be asked to change position a nurse will assist you. The test can take between 15-60 minutes. Following the procedure you will be left to rest and recover in the recovery area for up to 1 hour. If you have had sedation you will require someone to escort you home. You should not drive for the rest of the day.

At the end of the test the doctor will be able to give you the results of the test. However, if any biopsies are taken these results can take up to two weeks to be available. These results will be sent to your GP or told you at your next hospital appointment.

