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## **Colonoscopy Information**

### **What is "colonoscopy"?**

Colonoscopy is a procedure used to examine the bowel and allows for a variety of procedures to be carried out through the colonoscope. These procedures may include taking small tissue samples (biopsies) and removal of polyps (benign wart-like growths).

You will be given intravenous sedation by an anaesthetist. You will be sleepy for about half an hour following the procedure.

The colonoscope is a long highly flexible tube about the thickness of your index finger. It is inserted through the rectum into the large intestine to allow inspection of the large bowel. It is advisable that if any polyps are found they should be removed at the time of examination, as cancer of the large bowel can arise from pre-existing polyps. If you agree to the removal of any polyps found during the procedure, please sign the consent form.

Occasionally, but not often, bowel lesions are missed at the examination due to the size of the lesion, bowel structure, or the quality of bowel preparation.

### **Preparation**

You will be required to follow a clear fluid diet the day prior to your procedure and to undertake bowel preparation. The bowel preparation requires you to consume a quantity of salty tasting solution to cleanse the colon. You will need to fast for at least four (4) hours prior to your procedure, nothing to eat or drink.

### **DO's**

- DO inform your doctor if you are taking blood thinning medications such as warfarin, Clopidogrel, Plavix, Iscover, Dabigatran or Pradaxa
- DO inform your doctor if you are allergic to drugs or any other substance
- DO inform your doctor if you have heart disease
- DO inform your doctor if you are diabetic
- DO follow your bowel preparation instructions very carefully
- DO continue to take low dose aspirin, if applicable

### **DON'Ts**

DO NOT take iron tablets or drugs which may stop diarrhoea ten (10) days prior to your procedure and DO NOT take NSAIDs (arthritis medications) ten (10) days prior to your procedure

### **Post Procedure Care**

The sedation used for your procedure may affect your memory for some time after the procedure. You may find that you are unable to recall details of your discussion with Dr Prewett. If you do not recall discussions you have had before or after the procedure, please contact your doctor.

## **Risks and Complications**

For inspection of the bowel alone, complications of colonoscopy are uncommon. Most surveys report complications in 1 (or less) in 1,000 examinations.

The most common complications which can occur are:

- intolerance to the bowel preparation solution
- reaction to the sedative medication
- perforation of the bowel (slightly increased risk with removal of polyps)
- haemorrhage (slightly increased risk with removal of polyps)

A number of rare side effects can occur with any endoscopic procedure. If you wish to discuss the rare complications, please contact your doctor prior to the procedure.

## **FOLLOW YOUR BOWEL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY**

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*SJOG Specialist Centre or Geelong Private Hospital patients: you will be contacted about midday the business day prior to your procedure to confirm your admission time.*

*Geelong Hospital patients: please contact the hospital the business day prior to your procedure to confirm your admission time.*

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### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- Take regular medications (except iron tablets) with a sip of water
- You will **NOT** be able to drive yourself home and should arrange for someone to drive you
- You should also arrange for someone to be with you for the remainder of the day and overnight
- If you develop severe abdominal pain, bleeding from the back passage, vomiting, fever or other symptoms that cause you concern, contact your doctor immediately
- Diabetic patients, please bring your usual diabetic medications with you and pay special attention to medication instructions