



CT Colonography Procedure

Patient information

What is CT Colonography?

A CT colonography is a minimally invasive CT scan used to examine the colon (large bowel). To obtain clear, high-quality images, the bowel must be thoroughly cleansed before the examination. This requires a special dietary preparation and the use of laxatives, usually for 1–3 days prior to the scan.

The procedure involves a small tube gently inserted into the rectum, and air or carbon dioxide gas is introduced to inflate the colon. This allows the bowel walls to expand, providing detailed images for the radiologist to assess.

Preparation

You will be given instructions when booking your appointment. It is important to have a clean bowel before the test so that any polyp or cancer can be detected. Pregnant women should not have this test.

Instructions will be provided comprising of written information, instructions and laxative medication. This preparation will encourage bowel movement, and you may need to go to the toilet more times than usual. Following these instructions and ensuring good bowel preparation is essential for an accurate result. **It is important to read and follow the instructions exactly.**

If you believe you may be unable to complete the bowel preparation or that it has been unsuccessful, please contact us as early as possible.

No anaesthetic is required for CT colonography.

During the procedure

You will be required to change into a hospital gown and lie on the CT table. A small, lubricated tube will be gently inserted a short way into your rectum to inflate your bowel with air.

You may receive an intravenous (IV) injection of Buscopan, a medication to temporarily relax your bowel muscles and reduce cramping.

Once the bowel is filled with air, the CT scan will be performed. You will be required to roll into different positions between scans.

Once in the correct position you should remain as still as possible, as the slightest movement can blur the images. You may be asked to hold your breath for up to 20 seconds.

Most people experience a feeling of fullness or mild discomfort, similar to wind pain during the procedure.

After the procedure, the tube is removed. You can use the restroom to pass the remaining air and return to your normal diet and activities immediately.

Complications

Complications are rare but would include:

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Risk of injury or perforation of the bowel by the tube or by inflating the bowel with air. This may require other procedures and/or corrective surgery.
- The procedure may not be diagnostic if adequate bowel preparation/cleansing has not been achieved.