

Your CT Colonography Scan (Computer Tomography)

What is a CT colonography scan?

A CT colonography scan uses x-rays and a computer to construct cross-sectional images or "slice" pictures of your body which show your large bowel (colon) in great detail. Imagine your body as a sliced loaf of bread. You would then be able to take out individual "slices" to view the internal structures as well as producing three dimensional reconstructions of your body. We can also do a virtual "fly through" of your bowel.

Risks and benefits

All medical procedures carry some risks. With this procedure, the risk is radiation. This equipment is modern and well within its natural working life expectancy. It has routine service checks and is maintained with an on-going quality assurance programme. Radiation doses are kept as low as practicable.

We always weigh any risks against the benefits that may be gained from any procedure before going ahead. Your doctor and our radiology team will have agreed that the benefits to you will outweigh any risk of having this procedure. If you have any questions or do not wish to proceed, please contact us as soon as possible or speak to a member of our staff.

If you have had any x-ray procedure where you were injected with contrast (dye) and had a reaction to the contrast or if you have an allergy to iodine, please inform the radiographer when you arrive.

For these examinations, you will be required to take Picolax®, a strong laxative. If you are on any prescribed oral medication, eg contraceptives, antibiotics or anti-epileptics, their effects may be modified.

Female patients 12-55 years of age or if you are having menstrual cycles:

You must notify the department if:

- this appointment is not within 10 days of the start of your last period
- there is a possibility that you may be pregnant.

If either of these applies, a new appointment will be made.

Patients with diabetes

If your appointment is not between 9am and 10am please phone the number on the front of this leaflet immediately as we like to perform your examination during these times and will re-schedule your appointment.

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You will need adjustments to the dietary instructions in this leaflet. Please contact your Diabetes Nurse Specialist or Practice Nurse. Failing this, please contact Colchester General Hospital on the following phone numbers:

Specialist nurses 01206 742622
Diabetic secretary 01206 742394
Diabetes answerphone 01206 742076

Blood tests

To ensure that we perform your scan as safely as possible, we would like you to have a blood test (serum creatinine) within three months of your scan appointment. If you have not had this blood test yet, we would have sent you a form for this blood test with this letter. Please arrange to have the blood test before your scan. Otherwise your scan may be cancelled or rescheduled.

If you are diabetic and taking Metformin tablets, please do not take Metformin on the day of your scan. The radiographer who performs your scan can tell you when you can resume your Metformin tablets.

Do I need special preparation?

It is important for this examination that your bowel is as empty as possible. Please follow the suggested diet and take the Picolax as directed.

You are allowed only to eat certain foods, as these will not interfere with the bowel preparation.

List of foods that you may have:

(Please disregard the dietary instructions from the Picolax leaflet and only refer to this leaflet.)

- cornflakes, Rice Krispies or Special-K, with CoffeeMate made up with water
- boiled or poached eggs
- boiled or mashed potatoes (do not add milk or butter)
- plain macaroni, spaghetti or noodles
- plain boiled white rice
- chicken, fish or shellfish
- gravy, using stock cubes made with water only
- white bread/toast, without dairy products
- white or brown sugar or sweeteners
- clear jelly
- clear soups/broth.

Two days before your examination

Do not eat any of the following: high fibre cereals, bran, fruit, vegetables, red meat. Take all medicines as normal, with the exception of codeine, iron tablets, Lomotil and other stomach medicines.

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The day before your examination

8am

You have been sent two sachets of Picolax. Dissolve the contents of one sachet of in a large cup of water, stirring well. The solution may become hot. Wait until it cools before you drink it. This can take effect quickly. Be prepared for frequent bowel movements. You are advised to stay close to a toilet. You must drink plenty of clear fluids.

Drink at least one full glass of clear fluid every hour from 8am until 9pm

Suggested clear fluids:

water, mineral water, lemon/herbal/fruit teas, black coffee/tea, fizzy drinks, Bovril, Marmite or Oxo (vegetable, beef or chicken), fruit juice, such as orange squash.

You may use this table to check the times of fluid intake:

8am	9am	10am	11am	12am	1pm	2pm
3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm

8am - 9am

Breakfast

- either one boiled or poached egg or cereal, (see 'list of foods you may have')
- one slice of white bread with low fat spread, honey or seedless jam
- tea or coffee: black or with Coffee Mate - do not have milk.

Midday - 2pm

Lunch

- small portion (about 4oz/100g) of steamed, poached or grilled (not fried) white fish, chicken or soya/quorn
- 2oz/50g white pasta or rice; or a small portion of boiled potato or white bread without butter
- no fruit or vegetables
- you may have clear jelly for dessert.

4pm

Take the second sachet of Picolax (follow the same instructions as the first sachet at 8am)

6pm - 8pm

Evening meal

- no solid food
- clear soup (eg packet of soup with vegetables etc. strained off) or Bovril or Marmite drink
- black tea or coffee, no milk or substitute
- you may have clear jelly for dessert.

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On the day of your examination

Two hours before your appointment time drink the two bottles of gastrografin neat.

For an appointment before 12noon:

- no food or fluids after 8am
- you may bring a snack with you eg biscuits so you can have something to eat immediately after your examination.

For an appointment after 12noon:

- you can continue to drink clear fluids until 11am
- do not eat solid food
- you may bring a snack with you eg biscuits so you can have something to eat immediately after your examination.

Where do I go when I arrive at the hospital?

Enter through the Main Entrance of Colchester General Hospital. Continue straight down the main corridor.

Just before you get to the bottom of the corridor, you will see a sign with 'X-Ray (Beta suite)' on your left over the entrance. Proceed through the doors and to reception with your appointment letter.

What happens when I arrive?

You will be asked to remove all your clothes except your shoes and to put on an x-ray gown. You may bring your own dressing gown to wear over this. You may also bring your slippers to wear instead of your shoes if you wish. You should then have a seat in the waiting area until your name is called. You will be called into the scanning suite as close to your appointment time as possible. The procedure will be explained to you and we will check for possible allergies.

How is the CT colonography scan performed?

- you will be asked to lie on the scanner table
- a small needle will be inserted into a vein, usually in your arm
- a soft tube will be placed into your back passage (rectum) to introduce a small amount of air
- a bowel relaxant will be injected through the needle in your arm. This reduces any bowel cramping and allows the bowel to expand. (This injection can cause blurred vision for about 20 minutes. Please ensure that your vision has returned to normal before leaving the department). This is not x-ray dye
- a tube will be attached to the needle in your arm where contrast (x-ray dye) will be injected. This is to highlight the blood vessels in and around your bowel
- you will then be moved into the scanner (which looks like a large doughnut).

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The table will move in and out of the scanner as the x-ray pictures are taken. If you have the needle in your arm, the contrast (dye) is injected as the pictures are taken

- it is most important that you follow instructions closely and remain as still as possible during the filming sequences.

Will it be painful?

The insertion of the needle into the vein may cause discomfort to some people, but this is no worse than having a needle inserted for a routine blood test. The remainder of the examination is painless. You may experience mild abdominal discomfort, much like trapped wind, but it should be no worse. If you are having more discomfort than this, please inform the radiographer.

How long will I be at the hospital?

From the time of your arrival until the completion of your examination will be about one hour. This can obviously change due to other emergencies etc.

After the examination

You may resume normal activities. Please ensure your vision has returned to normal if you intend to drive home. In the rare event that following the examination you develop painful blurred vision you must attend hospital (A&E) for assessment.

Please be aware that you may still have loose stools for a couple of days after your scan but this will return to normal when you eat and drink normally.

How do I find out the results?

If your GP sent you for this test contact the surgery about 10 days after the examination is completed.

If you have had the x-ray dye injection

Although extremely rare, some people have a delayed allergic reaction to the contrast. If this happens and you have not left the hospital, let someone in the department know. If you have already left the hospital, you should contact your GP about any adverse symptoms that concern you. If you cannot contact your doctor, phone 01206 747474 and ask for Radiology, if between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. At all other times come to the Accident and Emergency Department.

Additional information

If you have any questions about your examination please contact the Radiology Department by phoning the number on the front of this leaflet.

If you have access to the internet via a personal computer and would like more information of how a typical radiology department operates, visit www.goingfora.com for a virtual tour.

Although your specific examination may not be shown on this tour, it is a good website and is produced and maintained by the Royal College of Radiologists.

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Parking is available within the hospital grounds. A ticket system is in operation so please bring some change for the ticket machine. Parking is at best, difficult, and the car parks are situated some distance from the Radiology Department.

Please allow sufficient time for you and anyone accompanying you to arrive in time for your appointment.

Consent

We must, by law, obtain your written consent before any operation and some other procedures. Staff will explain all the risks benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of your treatment, please do not hesitate to ask to speak to a senior member of staff.

Your photographic records

As part of your treatment, some kind of photographic record may be made, eg x-rays, clinical photographs or a video. You will always be told if this is going to happen. It will be kept in your health record and will be held in confidence and seen only by those involved in your care or who need to check the quality of care you have received. However, the use of photographs and recordings is extremely important for teaching or medical research. We may request to use yours for this and will ask for your written consent. Your personal details would be taken out so you cannot be identified.

Your NHS number

When you attend hospital you will be asked for your NHS number and other information such as your address. Please be patient with this procedure – it is to ensure our records are kept up to date and to protect your safety. However, if you do not know your NHS number, please do not worry – you will still receive care!

Concerns or complaints

If you have any concerns or worries about your care please contact the department responsible. However, if you are unable to resolve your concerns or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Integrated PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service), Complaints and Litigation Service on 01206 745926 or ask any member of staff for a leaflet, which will describe how you may make a complaint.

Your views

If you or a family member has recently been in either Colchester General Hospital or Essex County Hospital for any reason, you can tell us about your experience by visiting the www.nhs.uk website and then click on the "Comments" section, or write to the address on the front of this leaflet or email your comments to info@colchesterhospital.nhs.uk

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