

Colon Transit Study

WHAT IS A COLON TRANSIT STUDY?

A colon transit study is an examination that determines the length of time your body takes to process food. In other words, how long it takes for food to travel from your stomach to exiting your body as a bowel motion. This is done by swallowing a series of small, differently-shaped plastic markers at the same time over a three-day period and then having a plain x-ray of the abdomen on the fourth day. If there are any plastic markers left in the colon on the fourth day, they will be visible on the x-ray. The radiologist can then determine the time it takes for food to move through the colon.

This examination is often done in conjunction with a Defaecating Proctogram.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE:

- **You will be given three capsules (labelled 1, 2 and 3)** when you make your appointment. Each capsule contains differently shaped markers.
- Remove the capsule from the foil. Don't open the capsule but swallow it whole with water at breakfast time, one per day as follows:
 - **Day 1:** Take capsule 1 (O shape)
 - **Day 2:** Take capsule 2 (Double-D shape)
 - **Day 3:** Take capsule 3 (Tri-chamber shape)
 - **Day 4:** Appointment for abdominal x-ray / Defaecating Proctogram
- It is important for the success of the study to take each capsule on the designated day and at the same time each morning.
- Continue with your normal diet and activities but it is important not to take any laxatives, suppositories or enemas to help your bowels move.

COLON TRANSIT STUDY ONLY:

- You will be asked to change into a gown and lie on the x-ray table.
- A plain x-ray of your abdomen will be taken.

COLON TRANSIT STUDY WITH A DEFAECATING PROCTOGRAM:

- You will be asked to change into a gown and lie on the x-ray table.
- A plain x-ray of your abdomen will be taken.
- After this, you will be asked to insert the suppository and try to retain it for 15 minutes. Empty the bowel as required over the next 45 minutes.
- The defaecating proctogram will then be performed (**see 'Defaecating Proctogram' information sheet**).

AFTER THE PROCEDURE:

- The radiologist may give you a brief verbal report after the x-ray, and a formal written report will be sent to your referring doctor within the day.

RISKS OF THE PROCEDURE:

- Because this procedure is done under x-ray guidance, should notify your doctor prior to booking an appointment if you are pregnant or suspect you may be pregnant.