

CT Colonography (Virtual Colonography)

WHAT IS CT COLONOGRAPHY?

CT Colonography (also known as Virtual Colonography) is an advanced and highly accurate screening method used to detect small polyps or other growths inside your bowel. Polyps that grow on the inside lining of the bowel sometimes turn into cancers. Quicker and less invasive than conventional colonoscopy, this technique uses a 60 second CT scan of the abdomen, along with 3D reconstructed images, to view the inside of the bowel. Because of its non-invasive nature, it is not possible to take tissue samples or remove polyps during the procedure. If evidence of polyps are found on the scan, you will be referred for a conventional colonoscopy.

Before having a virtual colonography, the bowel needs to be free of everything solid so that the CT images will be clear. This involves having a low fibre and liquid diet for up to two days before the scan, drinking a special liquid called Gastrografin, and using a laxative. **Detailed preparation is provided on the following page.**

If you are pregnant or may be pregnant, you should talk to your doctor before this appointment.

BEFORE CT COLONOGRAPHY:

For the examination to be successful, it is essential for your bowel to be clear. We will provide you with a laxative and a liquid contrast agent called Gastrografin. **Please take these as prescribed and follow the diet sheet on the following page.**

Please also have plenty of water to drink.

When you arrive in the radiology department, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and consent for Buscopan, a medication that will relax your bowel. **Buscopan sometimes causes blurry vision and you may have to wait a little for this to clear if you are driving yourself home.**

DURING CT COLONOGRAPHY:

- A thin tube will be placed into your rectum to inflate your bowel with air so that polyps or other growths are more easily seen. You may feel a slight fullness.
- You will lie on your back on a table that slides into the CT scanner. The table will move slowly through the scanner as the images are taken.
- A second series of images is taken with you lying on your front.
- The whole procedure will take around 20-30 minutes.

AFTER CT COLONOGRAPHY:

- In most cases you should be able to resume your normal diet and activities. However, we recommend that you arrange for someone to drive you home after the scan.
- The radiologist will send a written report of the procedure to your referring doctor later in the day.

DIET & PREPARATION 

CT Colonography (Preparation & Diet):

PLEASE NOTE: If there are any alterations to the preparation or diet, you will be given separate instructions to follow.

Two days before your CT Colonography on:

- Take all your usual medications.
- You can drink water and clear fluids.
- **Start on a low residue/low fibre diet** i.e. white bread, plain crackers, English muffins, plain scones and bagels (with no butter), refined breakfast cereal, such as cornflakes and Rice Krispies, white rice, pasta, noodles, plain sweet biscuits, such as Roundwines.
- **Avoid all grains, fruit, vegetables and dairy products.**

One day before your CT Colonography on:

- Take all your usual medications.
- **Start a liquid diet** i.e. clear, strained soup, plain jelly (no fruit, cream or other additives), plenty of water, tea or coffee with no milk.
- **At 10am**, drink 50mls of the Gastrografin.
- **At 6pm**, drink 50mls of the Gastrografin.
- **Gastrografin causes looser and more frequent bowel motions.** You may also experience some abdominal discomfort, but this is quite normal. Gastrografin typically works within 2 - 3 hours but may take up to 6 hours, and we advise you to remain within easy reach of a toilet once you have taken it.
- Try to drink a glass of water or clear fluid (black tea or coffee) **every hour from lunchtime until you go to bed.**

On the day of your CT Colonography on:

- **Do not take your regular medications** but bring these with you to take after the examination.
- **Two hours before the scan**, use the Docolax suppository.
- You can consume barley sugars if necessary.
- If you have a dry mouth or feel dehydrated drink more clear fluids. You may have a teaspoon of sugar and 1/2 a teaspoon of salt per glass.

If you are a diabetic, please contact one of our nurses, Daniela or Allison, on (09) 520 9550 extn 7090.