

CT scan of your bowel

(Virtual colonoscopy)

Morning appointment



What is virtual colonoscopy?

Your doctor has asked us to perform this test to help to find the cause of your symptoms.

A virtual colonoscopy is an X-ray test using a CT scanner to produce two and three dimensional images of the whole of your large bowel (colon and rectum). CT stands for Computed Tomography, which is a way of using X-rays to produce images of a 'slice' through a part of the body.

This examination can detect abnormalities such as strictures (narrowings), polyps (small fleshy growths) or cancers.

Who will carry out the scan?

The procedure will be carried out by radiographers and radiography assistants who specialise in performing CT scans of the large bowel.

What will happen?

You will be asked to change into a gown. **For your own comfort you may wish to bring your own dressing gown and slippers.** The procedure will take between 20-30 minutes but be prepared to be in the scanning department for up to one hour.

You will be taken into the scanning room. The radiographer will explain the procedure to you and ask you some questions about the medication you take and your general health.

A cannula (thin plastic tube) will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand. Through this you will be given a drug to relax your bowel muscle, and an injection of contrast (a colourless X-ray dye) which enhances the scan images.

You will then be asked to lie on the scanner couch on your left hand side. A thin, flexible tube will be inserted into your rectum (back passage) and gas (carbon dioxide or air) will be introduced into the bowel through this tube. You will then be given an injection to relax the bowel muscles. Inflating the bowel with gas may make you feel bloated and cause a cramp like pain and the injection will help this. These feelings wear off very quickly after the procedure has finished.

As soon as the gas has been inflated you will be asked to turn and lie on your back so a scan can be taken. The scan will take about 10-20 seconds, or one breath hold. During this scan you will be given an injection of contrast (a colourless dye) which may make you feel a little warm. This is normal and will quickly wear off. You will then be asked to turn and lie either on your right or left side so that a second scan can be taken.

Sometimes we may need to take extra scans to make sure that all of your bowel has been seen. Occasionally we will perform a scan of your chest at the same time for additional information.

Are there any alternatives?

The large bowel (colon and rectum) can also be examined by a colonoscopy examination. This involves inserting a thin camera tube into the bowel through the back passage, which is then moved up and around the bowel. This is more invasive than virtual colonoscopy and usually requires sedation.

Are there any risks?

Virtual colonoscopy is considered a very safe test. However there is a tiny risk of making a small hole (a perforation) in the bowel, but this happens very rarely (less than 1 in 3000).

There is an extremely small risk that the injection given to relax your bowel muscles can have a delayed effect on your eyes, causing pain and blurred vision. It is important to seek urgent medical advice if this occurs. Blurring vision for a short time after the injection may occur but will soon pass.

Very occasionally it may not be possible to fully inflate the bowel, which may reduce the ability to diagnose some pathology (disease).

There is a small risk (approximately 4 in 100) that a polyp or other problem may be missed.

All X-ray examinations involve exposure to radiation in varying amounts, which may add very slightly to the risk of developing cancer. The length and level of exposure to radiation from X-rays in medical procedures is strictly controlled and kept to the minimum possible. There is a far greater risk by not having the investigation.

How do I prepare for it?

Bowel preparation

To give us a clear view of the bowel lining, your bowel has to be prepared before the test. This will involve clearing the bowel of stool (faeces) using a mild laxative and drinking an iodine based liquid (Omnipaque 300) which shows up the remaining stool (faeces) and liquid within the bowel.

PLEASE NOTE:

The bottle of Omnipaque 300 states that it is for IV use only. This drug is licenced to be administered orally and more information can be found in the Drug Information leaflet enclosed.

Please follow the instructions below carefully

Two days before the procedure

1. **At 7am** measure **25mls of liquid** from the **bottle of Omnipaque 300** into the plastic measuring pot (supplied). Dilute by adding **500mls of cold water**, then drink.
2. Follow a **low residue** diet.

Foods you can eat include:

- milk (up to 2 cups per day), plain yoghurt, cheese, butter, margarine
- white fish or chicken: boiled, steamed or grilled
- eggs, tofu
- white pasta, white rice
- white bread, white pitta, white chapattis
- potatoes with no skins, mashed or boiled
- clear soups (no solid bits eg. sieved chicken noodle), Bovril, Oxo
- clear jelly, boiled sweets, ice cream, chocolate (without fruit or nut pieces)
- salt, pepper, sugar, sweeteners and honey.

Have plenty to drink from the following:

- tea
- coffee
- squash
- fizzy drinks
- water
- clear fruit juices (eg apple, grape or cranberry).

Suggested meals include:

Breakfast: White bread or toast with butter and honey
Boiled or poached eggs

Lunch/Dinner: Grilled fish or chicken with white rice or boiled
potatoes (no skins)
Scrambled eggs on white toast
Vanilla ice cream

One day before the procedure

1. **At 7am** measure **25mls of liquid** from the **bottle of Omnipaque 300** into the plastic measuring pot. Dilute by adding **500mls of cold water**, then drink.
2. Take **4 Bisacodyl (Dulcolax) tablets** with water.
3. **Follow the low residue diet as above.**
4. **At 12 noon** measure **25mls of liquid** from the **bottle of Omnipaque 300** into the plastic measuring pot. Dilute by adding **500mls of cold water**, then drink.
5. **Continue with low residue diet as above.**
6. **At 7pm** measure **25mls of liquid** from the **bottle of Omnipaque 300** into the plastic measuring pot. Dilute by adding **500mls of cold water**, then drink.
7. **Continue with low residue diet as above.**

Throughout the day, drink plenty of the following:

- tea
- coffee
- squash
- fizzy drinks
- water
- clear fruit juices (eg apple, grape or cranberry).

On the day of your scan

Drink plenty of clear fluids (from the list above) but **DO NOT EAT ANY SOLID FOOD.**

Can I take other prescribed medication?

If you take Metformin (Glucophage) tablets for diabetes, please let us know on the day of your test. We may ask you to stop these tablets for two days following your test.

If you take iron tablets, stop these five days before your virtual colonoscopy. Continue to take all your other tablets as usual.

Please let us know if you have any of the following conditions when you arrive for your test:

- diabetes
- asthma
- kidney problems
- prostatism
- angina or any other heart problems
- glaucoma
- if you have any allergies
- if you have had a reaction to iodine or intravenous contrast in the past.

What happens afterwards?

The radiographer or assistant will take the cannula out of your arm and the tube out of your rectum (back passage). You will then be escorted to the toilet so that you can pass the gas we have put into your bowel. You may then dress.

We recommend that you bring a light snack (sandwich or biscuits) and a drink to have following your scan.

When will I get my results?

You will **not** be told the results of your examination whilst you are in the department. A specialist radiologist will review the images from your virtual colonoscopy when the examination is finished then send a report to the doctor who requested the examination as soon as possible.

You should receive an appointment to see the doctor again, if you do not already have one booked.

About your consent

Before we carry out any examination or treatment we will need your permission – this is known as consent. Before the examination starts we will explain what is involved and what we hope to gain from the examination. We will then ask your consent to continue. For some procedures it may be necessary to sign a consent form, if this is the case we will discuss it with you.

If you change your mind about having the examination or treatment, you can withdraw your consent at any time no matter how you gave it. Everything discussed between you and the member of staff will remain confidential.

What if I can't attend my appointment?

Please tell us as soon as possible. If you need to change your appointment please contact the X-ray appointment team on: 01872 252290.

Further information

If you have any questions about your examination, or need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Clinical Imaging Department on: 01872 255196.

If you are diabetic and require advice please phone the **Diabetic Centre RCHT on 01872 254560 between 9am and 10am Monday to Friday, at least two working days prior to your procedure.** If you need advice outside of these times contact your GP.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

