

Colonoscopy – your guide to the test

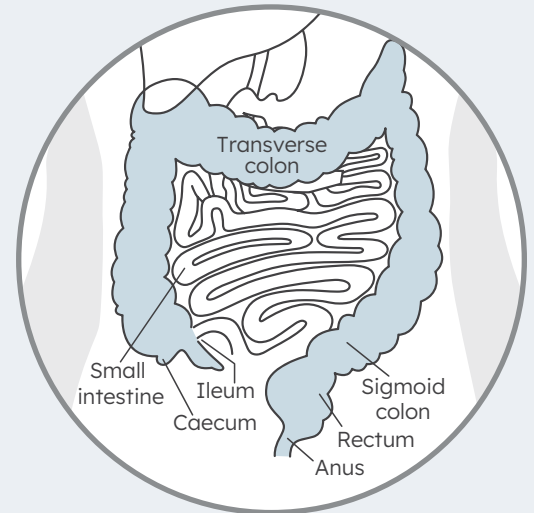
Colonoscopy is a visual examination of the lining of your large bowel (colon) with sedation. A flexible tube (about the thickness of the little finger) is passed through the rectum and around the colon.

A small camera sends a video onto a screen, so the doctor can look for any abnormalities. If necessary, photographs and biopsies (small tissue samples) can be painlessly taken for laboratory testing.

Polyps (abnormal growths of tissue) can be removed with biopsy forceps or cold snaring and large polyps are removed using a diathermy snare. This is done by passing a wire loop, like a lasso, over the polyp. The polyp is cut from the bowel lining using electrical current, which seals the tissue and stops bleeding. This current cannot be felt and causes no pain.

A colonoscopy may be suggested by your doctor if you have:

- Abnormal barium X-ray or abnormal CT colonography
- Abdominal pain
- Alteration in bowel habit e.g. diarrhoea, constipation
- Anaemia
- Bleeding from the bowel
- Family history of bowel cancer
- Occult (unseen) blood in the stool
- Previous treatment for polyps, bowel cancer or colitis



During your procedure you will be given **sedation**. It is important that you **do not drive or operate machinery for 12 hours** after your procedure. Please arrange for someone to drive you home following your procedure. You are not permitted, by law, to drive yourself. For safety reasons, if you are travelling on public transport, or in a taxi, please arrange for a support person to travel with you.

Preparation

Your colon must be completely empty of faecal material for the procedure to be thorough and safe. If it is not entirely clean certain areas may be obscured and the test may have to be repeated. Following the preparation, the return from your bowel should resemble urine (pale yellow). This will involve modifications to your diet. You will be given more specific instructions about this including a liquid diet for 1-2 days and the bowel preparation (laxative).

Prior to your procedure it is important for your doctor to know your medical history and in particular any previous endoscopies. Bring a list of your current medication with you, together with any relevant X-rays or barium studies. Fully disclose any health problems you may have had, as these may interfere with your colonoscopy, sedation or recovery.

You should mention:

- An allergy or bad reaction to medicines or anaesthetics.
- Taking medication to thin your blood including **Warfarin, Dabigatran, Rivaroxaban, Aspirin** or antiplatelet medication: e.g. **Clopidogrel** or **Ticagrelor**. Your doctor may ask you to stop taking these medications prior to your procedure or you may be given an alternative dose.
- Artificial hip or knee joints.
- Prolonged bleeding/clotting disorders or excessive bruising.
- **Diabetes** – you must discuss this with your doctor or nurse before undertaking any period of fasting.
- Heart and lung problems including **artificial heart valves and pacemakers**.
- Cardiac stents in the last six months.
- If you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

Procedure

You will be asked to sign a consent form, indicating that you understand the risks involved with the procedure. You will change into a hospital gown. In the examination room you will be supported by two nurses and given intravenous sedation to make you sleepy and relaxed. To ensure your safety throughout the procedure, it may be necessary for our nurses to hold your hands and legs. At all times your privacy and dignity will be respected. Your heart rate and oxygen levels will be monitored during the procedure. The endoscope is gently inserted into the bowel, which is inflated with CO₂ to obtain a good view. The CO₂ may cause wind-like cramps, but will pass quickly. Sometimes you may be asked to roll onto your back or side, or the nurse may need to press on your abdomen to help the doctor guide the colonoscope. The examination can take between 10 and 60 minutes.

After the test

CO₂ remaining in your bowel may cause bloating and discomfort but soon eases. You will be asked to rest for 15–30 minutes until the effects of the sedation have worn off. Light refreshments are offered (please advise us of any dietary requirements).

The doctor will discuss the procedure with you and will give you a written discharge information sheet. Due to the possible amnesic effects of the sedation, you may wish to have a support person with you when the doctor gives you the results. The report and results of any biopsies will be sent to your specialist and/or family doctor who referred you for the test.

Risks

Risks from a simple examination without any endoscopic therapy are very rare, but can occur after diagnostic therapeutic intervention such as the removal of polyps. Damage to the wall of the bowel by the instrument can cause a tear or perforation with leakage into the abdomen. This requires hospitalisation, antibiotics and sometimes surgery. (Risk factor: 1 in 1000 procedures).

Internal bleeding may occur from the site of the biopsy or polyp removal. It is usually minor and stops on its own.

Reaction to the sedation is rare.

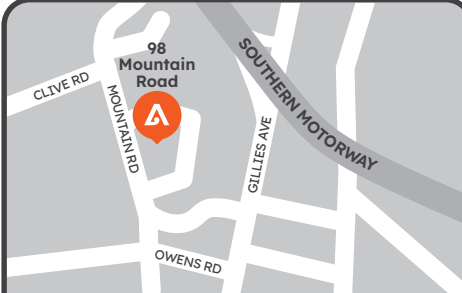
A polyp or lesion can be missed. The risks of missing polyps/lesions are higher if your bowel is not cleaned properly. If symptoms persist other investigations may be indicated and you are advised to revisit your doctor.

If you would like further clarification of these rare complications, please discuss them with your specialist or nurse on admission.

Please read these points carefully:

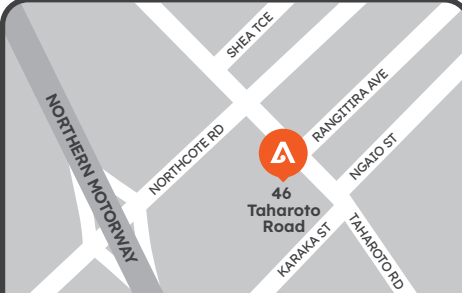
- You must contact your doctor if you suffer severe or prolonged pain, vomiting, passing of blood or a high temperature.
- If you have any questions or concerns please raise these with your doctor or nurse before the procedure.

Locations



A map showing the location of Allevia Endoscopy Epsom. The map highlights 98 Mountain Road, which is situated at the intersection of Clive Rd, Mountain Rd, Gillies Ave, and Owens Rd. The Southern Motorway is also visible nearby.

Allevia Endoscopy Epsom
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A map showing the location of Allevia Endoscopy North Shore. The map highlights 46 Taharoto Road, which is situated at the intersection of Northcote Rd, Karaka St, and Taharoto Rd. Other nearby streets include Shearpe, Rangitira Ave, and Ngato St. The Northern Motorway is also visible.

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