

DEPARTMENT OF RADIOLOGY

CT virtual colonoscopy examination

The X-ray department has received a request for you to have a CT colonoscopy examination with faecal tagging (sometimes called a CT pneumocolon). This leaflet tells you the purpose of the examination, what is involved and what the risks are. We will also send you an appointment letter which tells you exactly how you need to prepare for this examination along with the contrast that you need to take.

What is a CT (computed tomography) scan?

This is an examination using x-rays. A specialised scanner linked to a computer creates detailed pictures of the inside of your body. These pictures are examined by a specialist radiographer and a radiologist (a specialist doctor) and provide information to help us to diagnose your condition.

What is a CT virtual colonoscopy examination?

This is a CT scan of the last section of your gut – called the large bowel. The purpose of the test is to try to find out what may be causing your symptoms (e.g. a change in bowel habit, weight loss or anaemia).

A very small tube will be inserted into your back passage and some carbon dioxide (CO²) gas is used to inflate the bowel which allows the radiographer and doctor to see the bowel clearly. Scans are usually taken when you are lying on your left and your right sides.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

A friend or relative may bring you to your appointment, but should expect to wait outside of the department to assist with social distancing requirements unless you need assistance e.g. with walking or to get changed or They will not be able to accompany you into the CT scan room except in very special circumstances.

Are there any risks?

- Exposure to radiation: This is a low dose examination and the amount of radiation is kept to a minimum. This is equivalent to the amount that you receive naturally over a few years.
- There is a very small risk (1 in 3000 patients) of a small tear in the lining of the colon or rectum. This usually occurs only if the patient also has severe bowel inflammation.
- There is a slight risk from a Buscopan injection (to relax the bowel and make the examination more comfortable) to patients who have untreated glaucoma or heart rhythm problems. We will ask if you have heart disease or myasthenia gravis before giving you the injection.
- There may be side-effects from the bowel preparation (Gastrografin). Please read the information about Gastrografin carefully.

These risks are similar to those which could occur with other methods of examining the large bowel.

Your doctor has recommended this examination because he/she feels that the benefits are greater than the risk of not having the examination. Even so, this test cannot be guaranteed to detect all abnormalities in the bowel.

What happens at home before the examination?

In order for the radiographer and doctor to see the large bowel clearly, we need to show up the inside of the bowel. To do this we will ask you to drink a liquid called Gastrografin over the two days before the test.

Please read the separate patient information sheet about how to take the Gastrografin and the special diet instructions.

- You may need to stay near a toilet for the entire day.
- Drink fluid as instructed. This should help prevent headaches or dizziness caused by dehydration.
- Please continue to take all your other medication as normal.
- Please telephone us if you have had a biopsy of the large bowel in the 7 days before your appointment.

What happens during the examination?

The procedure usually lasts about half an hour but you may be at the hospital longer if we need to see emergency patients.

You will be asked to change into hospital gowns to ensure that no metal coins/objects are seen on the pictures, please bring a bag to put your clothes in.

Firstly, we will ask you to lie on your left side while the tube is gently inserted into the back passage. Carbon dioxide gas will slowly be put into your bowel using a special machine. This may make you feel bloated and 'full'. You may be given a small injection of Buscopan into a vein in the arm/hand, which relaxes the bowel and makes you more comfortable. It also improves the quality of the pictures.

The scanner machine will give you breathing instructions during your scan. For the second half of the examination we will ask you to turn onto your right side. The pictures will be checked to make sure we have clear pictures of your bowel.

After we have taken all necessary scans the tube is removed and you will be able to use the toilet.

Side effects and what happens after the examination?

- You may want to rest at home for the remainder of the day.
- It is normal to get abdominal cramp-like pains over the next few hours. The CO² gas will be absorbed in the next hour or two after the scan.
- You may still have some diarrhoea.
- In rare cases the injection given may blur your eyesight for an hour or so..

- **Do not drive or operate dangerous machinery until you are sure your eyesight is back to normal.**
- Very rarely, in people who are already at risk of acute angle glaucoma, the injection can cause painful red eyes.
If this happens you should call your GP or ED as an emergency.

When and how will I know the result of the examination?

The pictures of your bowel will be examined by the specialist radiographer and radiologist, who will then send a report of the results to the person who referred you.

- If your GP referred you the report is sent to him or her and you can make an appointment to see them 14 days later.
- If a doctor/consultant from the outpatient department referred you then you will receive the result in due course, sometimes this will be at your next outpatient appointment.
- Any queries regarding results should be made to your consultants' secretary.

Further information

Further information can be found on the following websites:

www.rcr.ac.uk or www.goingfora.com
(Royal College of Radiologists)

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

How to access Radiology:

How to find us:	Please follow signs to the Urgent Care Centre/Minors (Emergency Department) in front of Carpark G. On entering, turn immediately left and follow signs to the CT/MR Reception. You can find more information at www.nnuh.nhs.uk .
Hospital Transport:	If you are eligible for hospital transport, please telephone 0333 240 4100.
Contact details:	Telephone: 01603 286108 Email: nnu-tr.fluoroappointments@nhs.net Website: www.nnuh.nhs.uk We text appointment reminders if we have your mobile number

