



CT COLONOGRAPHY

What to expect from your CT scan

What is CT Colonography?

CT Colonography / Virtual Colonography is a way of looking inside your bowel for polyps or any reasons why you may be having problems with your bowel. It involves using a CT scanner to produce two and three dimensional images of the large bowel (colon and rectum).

During a CT colon examination we will use gas to inflate your bowel through a thin flexible tube placed into your back passage. We will do the scans with you lying on your back and your front and occasionally on your side.

After the scans, doctors will look at your images for polyps and any further causes of your bowel problems. If they see anything unusual on the images, we may offer you further tests.

What is the alternative to CT Colonography?

The alternative and standard way of examining the large bowel is through Colonoscopy. A tube with a camera on the end (a colonoscope) is passed into the back passage and moved up and around the large bowel.

Colonoscopy is more invasive than CT Colonography and you would need to be sedated, so you would possibly stay in a medical facility for a few hours after. However, it does allow the doctor to remove small amounts of tissue for testing, called a biopsy, and they can remove polyps if necessary.

Colonoscopy only gives information about your large bowel; whereas CT Colonography can provide information about the other structures inside your abdomen as well.

Is CT Colonography safe?

As CT involves x-rays, radiation exposure is a risk. Our CT scanner facilitates more accurate diagnosis with lower exposure to radiation than other CT scanners. It has been designed to the highest standards of radiation safety, and we will always use the lowest amount of radiation to take the images.

CT Colonography is a very safe scan. Problems can happen, but they are rare.

Is CT Colonography safe? - Continued

Problems which might occur are similar to those which can happen with CT Colonoscopy, including:

- Abdominal discomfort
- Feeling faint
- Damage to the bowel wall
- Dehydration caused by the oral preparation
- Contrast reaction

The minimal health risks of having a CT scan are greatly outweighed by the benefits, which include high accuracy and early detection of even the smallest abnormalities. Your doctor has chosen this scan for you having fully considered the relative risks and benefits.

You will be asked to fill in a safety questionnaire in advance to ensure you are safe to have the scan and minimise any risks.

If you are pregnant we will need to discuss the need for the diagnostic imaging tests as some scans can be harmful to unborn babies.

How do I prepare for my scan?

Bowel Preparation

Your bowel must be prepared before the test to give us a clear view of your bowel wall. You will be provided with a separate leaflet explaining the bowel preparation in more detail (leaflets are also available on our website www.harleystreet-medicalcentre.com).

You will be provided with an oral preparation of a laxative solution and a bowel 'tagging' solution to drink the day before your CT scan.

More information regarding the preparation for the examination will be provided to you.

If you feel unwell after taking your oral preparation, please do not take any more and contact us or your doctor.



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How do I prepare for my scan? - *Continued*

Tablets and Medicines

You must stop taking any iron tablets seven days before your CT Colonography. Continue to take your other regular medications.

When you arrive for your scan

Please let us know if you have any of the following:

- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Kidney problems
- Prostate problems
- Angina
- Glaucoma

Also let us know if you:

- Have had a heart attack in the last six months
- Are waiting for heart surgery
- Are waiting for a coronary angioplasty
- Have any allergies

If you are breastfeeding, you may wish to express milk ahead of your scan, as you are advised to stop breastfeeding for a period of 24 hours after you have had the contrast injection.

You are welcome to bring a friend or relative with you on the day of your scan, although for safety reasons they won't be able to accompany you in the scanning room.

If you are feeling particularly apprehensive we can arrange a pre-visit to our Centre to allow you to see the scanner. Please contact us if you wish to arrange this.

How long will it take?

The scan usually takes approximately 20-30 minutes but you may be in the department for up to an hour.

What can I expect on the day of my scan?

You will need to arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. During this time we will run through a CT safety questionnaire. It is very important to be accurate when answering the questions.

What can I expect during my scan? - *Continued*

The radiographer will explain the procedure and answer any questions before asking for your consent to proceed. Please let the radiographer know if you had any problems with your bowel preparation.

You will need a 'contrast agent injection' which contains iodine to help make the images clearer. Contrast agent is a special liquid that highlights body tissue to make subtle differences, organs or disease easier to see.

During the injection you may experience a warm flush, a metallic taste in the back of your mouth and sometimes the feeling of passing urine. Allergic reactions to contrast are rare and you will be asked to record any known allergies on your CT safety questionnaire. If you feel discomfort at any time during the scan, or if you feel sick, please inform the radiographer.

The radiographer or doctor will ask you to lie down on the scanner table and will insert the cannula for injection later on during the examination. They will then pass a small flexible tube into your back passage. Gas (carbon dioxide) will be passed gently into your bowel through the tube in your back passage. You may feel some bloating and mild discomfort in your abdomen which may feel like 'bad wind'. This is normal, but it must be kept in and will pass soon after the procedure is finished.

Once the radiographer or clinician is satisfied with the amount of gas in your bowel, they will usually do your scan with you lying first on your back, then on your front and/or side. Each scan will take approximately 10-15 seconds.

The radiographer will be able to see, hear and speak to you at all times through an intercom and viewing window and will give you simple instructions during the scan.

What happens after my scan?

You may eat and drink as usual and return to your normal daily routine straightaway.



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What happens after my scan? - *Continued*

We advise you to drink plenty of fluids to help flush the contrast out of your urinary system.

Please check the skin where we injected you for signs of infection (for example, redness, soreness or weeping) over the next 24 hours. It is normal to experience some bruising in the area where we injected you once the needle has been removed.

If you see any signs of infection, or if you experience any of the rare side effects, including nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, itchiness, or a rash on the body, please contact your doctor or visit a local A&E department immediately.

If you are breastfeeding and have had a contrast injection you are advised to stop breastfeeding and express and discard milk for 24 hours after the injection. Breastfeeding can recommence as normal after the 24 hour period.

How do I receive my results?

After your scan, if you are a private patient the radiographer will provide you with a CD of your images to take away. (We do not usually issue CDs for non-private patients, unless the doctor or consultant who referred you has asked us to).

A radiologist will write a report and send it to the doctor or consultant who referred you, usually within 48 hours. Your report will contain a summary of the radiologist's findings and their recommendations for further follow-up.

You will need to arrange an appointment to discuss your report with the doctor or consultant who referred you for the scan.

Our chaperone service

All patients are entitled to have a chaperone present for any consultation, examination or procedure if they feel it is necessary. This chaperone may be a family member or friend. Sometimes it may be necessary for a formal chaperone (for example, a trained member of staff) to be present.

Please let us know before your appointment if you would like a chaperone.

Further questions

If you have any further questions or worries please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of our team. Your comfort and safety is of utmost importance to us.

For further information, including contact details and directions on how to find us, please visit our website: www.harleystreet-medicalcentre.com.

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We are committed to providing clean, safe premises for our clients in line with the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Code of Practice on the Prevention and Control of Infections and related guidance (December 2010) and all other Department of Health guidance.