

Colonoscopy

What Is A Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a frequently performed test to investigate the lower part of the bowel. This endoscopic procedure allows the consultant to look directly at the lining of the bowel to detect conditions such as:

- **Inflammatory bowel disease**
- **Polyps**
- **Bowel cancer**

The procedure helps diagnose unexplained changes in bowel habits such as constipation, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, bleeding, and weight loss. Biopsies can be taken during the procedure, and polyps can be removed if necessary.

Do I Need Any Preparation Beforehand?

You will receive written instructions about the test in advance. To ensure the bowel is completely clear, you will be given strong laxatives (Picolax). Following the instructions carefully and drinking plenty of clear fluids is important for an accurate examination.

As sedation or an anaesthetic will be used, you will be given specific instructions on when to stop drinking beforehand. It is essential to follow these guidelines strictly.

You should inform your doctor if you:

- have diabetes
- take blood-thinning medications such as aspirin, clopidogrel, or warfarin

What Does The Test Involve?

- The consultant will use a colonoscope, a long, flexible tube with a light and camera at the end. This is passed through the anus to allow a detailed view of the bowel lining on a screen
- In most cases, the entire colon and sometimes the last part of the small intestine (terminal ileum)

can be examined

- The consultant can remove polyps and take biopsies during the procedure

What Are The Possible Risks?

A colonoscopy is a safe and commonly performed procedure, but as with any medical test, there are some small risks:

- **Bowel perforation (tear)** - Extremely rare but may require surgical treatment
- **Bleeding** - If polyps are removed or biopsies are taken, mild bleeding can occur, which usually resolves on its own or with additional treatment
- **Sedation risks** - Rare side effects may include temporary breathing, bloodpressure, or heart rate changes, but these are usually mild and quickly treated
- **Incomplete procedure** - In some cases, it may not be possible to fully examine the bowel, and a repeat colonoscopy may be needed

If you experience severe pain, persistent bleeding, or feel unwell after the procedure, contact the hospital, or your consultant immediately.

What Happens Afterwards?

- The procedure takes about 30 minutes to complete
- You may experience mild bloating or wind-like pains, which usually settle quickly
- As sedation or anaesthesia is used, you will need time to fully recover before going home
- Your consultant will discuss the initial results with you immediately after the procedure
- If biopsies were taken, results will be available within a few days

Why Choose The Midlands Bowel Clinic?

- Experienced colorectal specialists providing expert care
- State-of-the-art equipment for detailed and accurate diagnosis
- Minimally invasive procedures ensuring quick recovery
- Personalised treatment plans tailored to your individual needs

Contact Us

If you are experiencing digestive issues, rectal bleeding, or changes in bowel habits, book a colonoscopy today for early diagnosis and peace of mind.