

# *CT Colonography*

## *INFORMATION SHEET*

CT Colonography (also known as “virtual colonoscopy”) is a special scan using low dose CT technology to examine the inside of the large bowel for cancers and growths called polyps.

CT Colonography may be performed for bowel related symptoms or when a colonoscopy has been unsuccessful.

### **What preparation is required?**

When you phone for an appointment, you will be asked to come in to the practice to pick up a bowel preparation (“bowel prep”) kit. This contains information and medications required to clean the bowel prior to your procedure. The bowel preparation starts 3 days before your scan appointment. It is important to follow these instructions carefully as a clean colon is required to clearly see any polyps that might be present. Unfortunately, this means you will be opening your bowels frequently the day before the procedure.

If you have diabetes, kidney or heart problems, please inform your doctor and our staff when you phone for your appointment, as the preparations may need to be changed.

CT scanning is generally not recommended during pregnancy.

### **What happens during my CT Colonography?**

The radiographer will call you in, confirm your name and explain the procedure to you. You will be asked to change into a gown.

You will lie on the bed of the CT scanner. The radiologist will give you an injection of “Buscopan” in a vein in the arm. This is a medication to help relax the bowel and make the procedure more comfortable by reducing any cramping that might occur.

A small tube will be placed in your rectum and a small balloon inflated on the rectal tube to help keep the tube in place and prevent the air from leaking out. The bowel is then gently inflated as much as possible with carbon dioxide gas to give a clear view of the bowel wall. You may feel some fullness when the bowel is being inflated.

Once ready, you will move through the CT scanner lying on your back to obtain the first set of images. You will then be asked to roll onto your stomach and moved through the CT scanner again for a second and final set of images.

The procedure is usually completed within 20 minutes.

### **What happens after the procedure?**

After the scans are completed, the tube is removed and you will be able to go to the toilet and change back into your clothes.

You will be able to resume your usual activities and diet immediately after the procedure.

CT Colonography scans are usually reported by our radiologists the same day, and the report will be sent to your doctor electronically.

### **Are there any risks for CT Colonography?**

All CT scans use x-rays, but the radiation dose given is as low as possible for the procedure, and the benefit of an accurate diagnosis far outweighs the risk.

Buscopan may cause problems with your vision if you have glaucoma. The procedure can still be performed without Buscopan.

There is a very small risk that inflating the large bowel could injure or perforate the bowel, but this is estimated to be fewer than 1 in 10,000 patients.