

# Colonoscopy and flexible sigmoidoscopy

## Aftercare advice

**This leaflet explains more about returning to your everyday activities after your endoscopic examination of your large bowel. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

### When can I leave hospital?

You will be able to leave hospital when the doctor or nurse looking after you says you are well enough. You will have to wait at least an hour if you have sedation.

The sedation lasts longer than you may think, so in the first 24 hours after your examination you should not

- drive or ride a bicycle/ car
- operate machinery or do anything requiring skill or judgement
- cook
- drink alcohol
- take sleeping tablets
- sign legal documents, make any important decisions, or sign contracts.

If you have had sedation you will need someone to escort you home and we advise that they stay with you for 24 hours.

We will give you a copy of your report and send a copy to your GP the day after your procedure. However, many GPs may not have this report on their system for about 10 days to 2 weeks after your procedure.

### After I leave hospital

You should rest at home following your procedure. You can eat and drink normally and should be able to carry out your normal activities 24 hours after the test.

You can take your other prescription drugs.

### Will I be in pain?

If you have any bloating or abdominal discomfort this may be from the air that was put into your bowel by the endoscopist during the examination. This is normal and should settle within 24 hours.

If your discomfort doesn't settle try to pass wind. You can try to move about and change position to help settle the air in your stomach. You can also try warm drinks, or peppermint water (sold over the counter at most Pharmacy's) or peppermint tea.

## What should I do if I have a problem?

Call the endoscopy department if you have any questions or concerns. Contact details are listed on the last page of this leaflet.

You should go to your nearest emergency department (A&E) if you develop any of the following symptoms. You should take your endoscopy report with you.

- Persistent or worsening abdominal (tummy) pain
- A fever (temperature above 37.5°C)
- Difficulty breathing or becoming unusually breathless
- You have black poo (known melaena)
- You are unable to stop vomiting (being sick).

If you see traces of blood from your back passage, this could be because you had biopsies taken during the examination or you have some haemorrhoids that have been irritated and this is normal. Blood clots or large amounts of blood are not normal so contact the nurses on the number below or contact your GP. If you are seriously concerned then go to your nearest emergency department (A&E). You should take your endoscopy report with you.

## Will I have a follow-up appointment?

The endoscopist or recovery nurses will explain your procedure and explain any next steps before you leave hospital and give you a copy of your report. Sometimes due to the sedation you may be sleepy and not able to remember the details and we are happy to explain by phone at a later date.

If you need a repeat procedure this will be arranged before you leave. If you need a follow up appointment and you do not already have one booked, this will be posted out to you for the next available clinic, or if it is urgent, we arrange this before you leave.

If you have had any samples taken the results will be sent to the Doctor who referred you or they will be reviewed in a virtual clinic and the results will be sent to your GP. A virtual clinic is where a gastroenterologist or surgeon will review your notes and results rather than have you attend a face to face appointment. You will be sent a letter from this clinic with your outcome and results of any biopsies and next steps such as being discharged back to your GP or a follow up review in clinic.

**IMPORTANT** Please do not contact the Endoscopy Unit for your biopsy results as they are unable to give them to you. If you have not received your results within 4 weeks please contact the numbers below. If on your report your follow up is:

- Surgical Virtual Clinic (SVC), please call 020 7188 7188 ext. 53075
- Gastroenterology Virtual Clinic (GVC), please call 020 7188 7188 ext. 87790

## Useful sources of information

For frequently asked questions and general endoscopy information please visit:  
<https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/our-services/endoscopy/overview.aspx>

### Guts UK

This is a charity that specialises in providing information about diseases and problems that people may have with their digestive system or gut. [www.gutscharity.org.uk](http://www.gutscharity.org.uk)

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the St Thomas' Endoscopy Department **t:** 020 7188 7188 then dial or ask for the extension number below. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 7pm

**Reception Desk:** ext. 54046 (Monday to Friday 8am to 4.30pm)

**Nurse in Charge:** ext. 54059 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

**Out of hours:** ask for the on call Gastroenterology Registrar (via Rota watch).

**Guy's Hospital Endoscopy Dept. t:** 0207 188 1734 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

## Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS)      **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)      **e:** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815      **e:** [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

## NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111      **w:** [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)

## NHS website

This website gives information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing. **w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

**t:** 0800 731 0319      **e:** [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk)      **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership)

## Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets), or **e:** [patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk)

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