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PATIENT INFORMATION REGARDING COLONOSCOPY PROCEDURE

The colonoscopy is a flexible telescope, about the thickness of a finger that is inserted through the anus for examination of the large bowel. Certain procedures can be carried out through the colonoscopy including taking small tissue samples (biopsy) and removal of polyps. An alternate method of examining the large bowel is barium enema but this is generally considered to be less accurate and does not allow taking of biopsy samples or removal of polyps.

A formal prostate examination is not undertaken at colonoscopy and will have to be followed by your general practitioner if there is any concern.

Before the procedure, the bowel will need to be cleaned to allow proper examination. If the bowel is not adequately cleaned the procedure may have to be abandoned and repeated at a later stage, once the bowel has been cleaned.

Please inform either the medical or nursing staff if you are sensitive (allergic) to any other drugs or substances. You would also notify the doctor if you have been taking blood thinning tablets (Warfarin or Coumadin). If you have any doubt about the medication that you are taking, please discuss this with the doctor before the procedure. In addition, if you have heart valve disease or a pacemaker, this must be brought to the attention of the doctor. You will be sedated for the examination and will remain sedated for some time following. Therefore, you are advised not to drive or carry out any other demanding task for the remainder of the day.

Procedures that are carried out are removal of polyps which are often done by placing a wire snare around the base and applying an electrical current. At the time of examination you will be sedated and it is therefore not possible to discuss the removal of a polyp with you. If you have any reservation regarding removal of a polyp, you must discuss this matter before the colonoscopy with the doctor.

Following the procedure, further instruction will be given to you regarding what you should do in the following 24 hours after colonoscopy. The sedatives given at the time may impair your memory and therefore it is important that you are accompanied by a relative or friend home. If you have any severe abdominal pain, bleeding, fever or any other symptoms that cause you concern following the procedure, you should contact your doctor immediately.