

# Colonoscopy

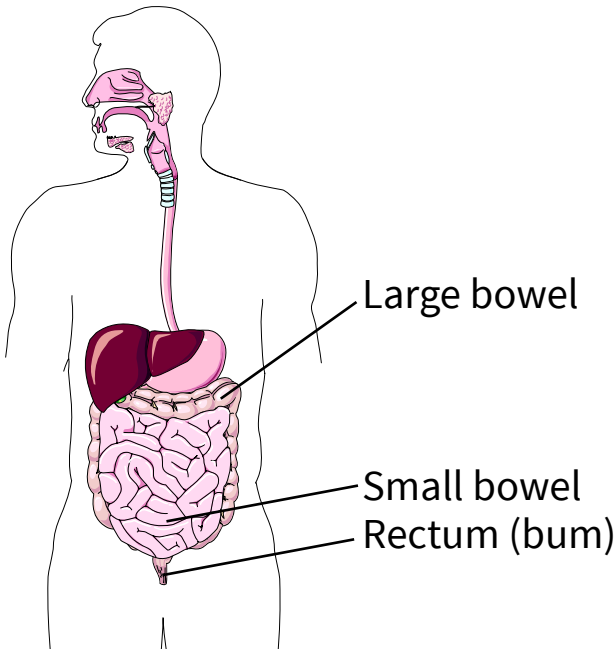
## Aberdeen Regional Hospital

**Aberdeen Regional Hospital**  
835 East River Road  
New Glasgow, NS B2H 3S6  
› Phone: 902-752-8311,  
extension 1117

# Colonoscopy

## What is a colonoscopy?

- This is a test to look at your large bowel. The large bowel is also called the large intestine or the colon.



- This test is done by a specialist using an endoscope (a flexible tube with a light and a camera on the end).

Endoscope



## **What are the risks of this test?**

A colonoscopy has low risks. As with any test, there are still some risks. Your specialist will talk with you about the risks before your test.

### **Possible risks include:**

- › A tear in your bowel wall (1 in 1,000 to 1 in 2,000 chance). If this happens, you may need surgery to fix the tear.
- › Bleeding, if a polyp was taken out (1 in 500 chance) or if a tissue sample was taken (1 in 10,000 chance). This may stop on its own, or you may need more treatment.

## **How do I get ready for this test?**

**You may have sedation (medication to help you relax) during this test.**

- **You must have a responsible adult:**
  - › **take you home after your test.**
  - › **stay with you overnight.**

**If this is not possible, call the GI Unit before your test. We may have to cancel your test.**

- › **Phone: 902-752-7600, extension 1117**

## **Before your test:**

- **Plan to be off work the day of your test.**
- Most people can go back to work the day after their test or 24 hours (1 day) after sedation.
- **Your bowel must be empty to do this test.**  
Stool (poop) or fluids may make it hard to see the inside of your bowel.
- **Your specialist will give you instructions for cleaning your bowel. Please follow these instructions carefully.**
- If your bowel is not cleaned the right way:
  - › the test will be less accurate.
  - › the specialist may not be able to finish the test.
- **Tell your nurse and your specialist if you take medication and/or insulin for diabetes. You may need to follow special instructions for taking these before your test.**

- **Blood thinning medications will need to be stopped for at least 48 hours (2 days) before your test as they can raise your risk of bleeding. Tell your nurse and your specialist if you are taking any of these medications to prevent your test from being cancelled:**
  - › Blood thinners, like: ASA (Aspirin®) or any product containing ASA, warfarin, heparin (Fragmin®), dabigatran (Pradaxa®), rivaroxaban (Xarelto®), apixaban (Eliquis®), edoxaban (Lixiana®)
  - › Antiplatelets, like clopidogrel (Plavix®), prasugrel, ticagrelor (Brilinta®)
- **Tell your nurse and your specialist if you:**
  - › have heart or lung disease.
  - › are allergic to any medications.

**If you need to cancel your test, please call the GI Unit at least 2 days before your appointment. This will give us time to book another patient.**

- › Phone: 902-752-7600, extension 1117

## The day before your test

- Follow the instructions your specialist gave you for cleaning your bowel.

## The day of your test

It is very important to follow these instructions:

- **Do not drink any fluids at least 4 hours before your test.**
- If you take medication for your heart, blood pressure, or breathing, take your medication as usual, unless your health care team tells you not to.
- **Bring a list of all your medications** (including prescription and over-the-counter medications, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal medications, vitamins, and supplements) with you to the hospital.
- **Do not wear any jewelry or bring any valuables with you to the hospital.** The hospital is not responsible for the loss of any items.
- All Nova Scotia Health sites are smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free. **Please do not wear scented products.**

## **Where do I go for my test?**

- **Register 1 hour before your appointment time at the Central Registry Desk on the ground floor of the Aberdeen Regional Hospital. They will give you a form.**
  - › **Bring this form with you to the GI Unit/One Day Surgery on the first floor.**

## **How is the test done?**

- An intravenous (I.V.) tube will be put in your hand or your arm. You may be given medication to help you relax, and to help with any pain.
- The specialist will put the endoscope into your rectum and slowly move it through to your large bowel.
- They will use the endoscope to put air into your large bowel. The air will make your bowel bigger so they can see it better.
- The air may cause mild cramping and/or pain, or give you gas. You may feel like you need to have a bowel movement (poop).
- The specialist may take out a polyp or take a tissue sample during the test. This will not hurt.

- Your health care team will monitor your vital signs (heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure) during and after the test.
- The test may take up to 60 minutes (1 hour).

## **What are polyps and how are they taken out?**

- Polyps are small pieces of tissue that can form on, or in, an organ in your body (like your bowel).
- If polyps are found during your procedure, they will be taken out by wrapping a thin wire around the polyp and cutting through it.
- The inside of your bowel has no nerve endings. This means you will not feel any pain if you have polyps or tissue samples taken out during your test.

## **What will happen after the test?**

- You may feel like you need to pass gas or have a bowel movement. Please try to pass the gas. This feeling should not last long.
- You may have bloating, or mild stomach cramps for a few hours.
- You will be able to go home 45 to 60 minutes after your test.



### **If you had sedation:**

- You must have a responsible adult take you home after your test and stay with you overnight.
- Do not walk home. You may take a bus or a taxi home only if a responsible adult goes with you.

### **For 24 hours (1 day) after having sedation:**

- Do not drive a car or use any heavy machinery.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Do not care for others (including children).
- Do not sign any legal or important papers, or make any financial (money) decisions.

### **If you had a polyp or a tissue sample taken:**

- You may see small amounts of blood in your first couple of bowel movements. This is common.
- You will be told when you can start taking your blood thinners again.

**Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you have any of these symptoms after your test:**

- › Bleeding from your rectum that does not go away after 3 bowel movements
- › Bleeding from your rectum that makes you feel dizzy, weak, or like you will faint
- › A lot of stomach (belly) pain

## **Your Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Feedback**

If you have questions, compliments and/or concerns, call our Patient Relations team:

- › Phone (toll-free): 1-844-884-4177
- › [www.nshealth.ca/contact-us/patient-feedback](http://www.nshealth.ca/contact-us/patient-feedback)

You are an important member of your health care team. It is important to understand your rights and responsibilities as a patient.

- Your rights are:
  - › How you should expect to be treated
- Your responsibilities are:
  - › How you can be an active member of your health care team
  - › How you can help us give you the best and safest care possible

We encourage you and your support persons to talk openly about your care. Your support persons are people you have chosen to give you physical, psychological, and emotional support (like help making decisions, coordinating your care, and communicating with your health care team).

If you have questions or want to talk more about your rights and responsibilities, please talk with a member of your health care team or with the Patient Relations team.

# Quality care and safety in the hospital

## Rights:

- You have the right to have the best and safest health care possible.
- You have the right to have the most comfort we can provide.

## Responsibilities:

- You are responsible for being an active, involved, and informed member of your health care team. If you have questions, please ask a member of your health care team.

## Before coming to the hospital

- When you come to the hospital or health centre, give your health care team as much information as you can about your health. This will help us give you the best possible care.
- Bring a list of all your medications (including prescription and over-the-counter medications, herbal medications, vitamins, and supplements). Tell your health care team how much you take and when you take them.
- **Tell all your health care providers if you have allergies or reactions to medications or food.**

- If you are coming to the hospital or health centre for an appointment and will need help getting around, bring your support person with you. If this is not possible, ask a staff member as soon as you arrive.

## **During your appointment**

- **Make sure that a health care team member checks your full legal name and birthdate any time they give you tests (like blood tests), treatments, or medications.** Feel free to ask them to do this.
- Ask a member of your health care team if you do not understand what procedure you are having. This is important so you know what symptoms or side effects to watch for and how to help your recovery.
- Ask a member of your health care team about any new or different medications. Ask what the medications are and why you are getting them. We want you to understand your medications and how they can help you.

- Tell a member of your health care team if you think you are about to get the wrong treatment or medication.
- Help prevent infections by washing your hands often. Tell your support persons and members of your health care team to do this, too.
- For more information, please use the QR code or the link below, or ask a member of your health care team for pamphlet 1441, *Infection Prevention and Control*:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/1441](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/1441)



## Questions to ask yourself before you go home:

- Do you have all the information you need?
- Do you understand the instructions your health care team gave you, including how to take your medications (if you were given new ones)?
- Do you understand who is responsible for making any follow-up appointments and when?

If you have questions or concerns about your care, talk to a member of your health care team or ask to talk to the unit manager right away.

Keep the phone numbers for your primary health care provider, other health care providers, and your pharmacy in your wallet or bag, or saved in your cell phone. Share with your support person or keep a copy by your home phone.

# Dignity and respect

## Rights:

- You have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration.
- You have the right to get care in a safe, respectful environment.

## Responsibilities:

- You are responsible for treating all staff, volunteers, and other patients with dignity, respect, and consideration.
- You are responsible for talking and acting respectfully toward all staff, volunteers, and other patients.

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.**



# Information about your health care

## Rights:

- You have the right to ask questions and to get information about your health care, in words you understand.
- You have the right to know the names, positions, titles, and professional titles of everyone on your health care team.
- You have the right to share what you think and notice about your health care experience, and to express your concerns.
- You have the right to an explanation and list of any fee for service not covered by a provincial or private health care plan.
- You have the right to review or get copies of your health record (there are some exceptions). There may be a fee. For more information, contact:
  - › Phone (toll-free): 1-833-213-1634
  - › Email: [Privacy@nshealth.ca](mailto:Privacy@nshealth.ca)

## **Responsibilities:**

- You are responsible for giving your support persons clear and correct information about your health.
- You and your support persons are responsible for telling us as soon as possible if there is a change in your condition.
- You are responsible for asking questions until you feel you have all the information you need to make informed health care decisions.
- If a service is not covered by Nova Scotia's health insurance program (MSI), you are responsible for knowing what your private health care insurance covers. You are also responsible for paying any fees. For more information, visit:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/fees-and-bill-payments](http://www.nshealth.ca/fees-and-bill-payments)

# Support persons

## Rights:

- You have the right to:
  - › Name up to 2 people who will be your support persons
  - › Decide how your support persons will take part in your care and decision-making

## Responsibilities:

- Your support persons are responsible for:
  - › Caring for themselves without support or supervision
  - › Providing their own food and personal care items
  - › Being sensitive to the needs of other patients and their loved ones
  - › Limiting noise and disturbances

# Privacy

## **Rights:**

- You have the right to have your health information kept confidential (private).
- For your ongoing care, your health information is shared among the health care team. With your consent, we can also share this information with others.
- You have the right to as much privacy as we can give.

## **Responsibilities:**

- You are responsible for respecting the privacy and confidentiality of others, including patients and staff.
- We encourage you and your support persons to talk openly about your health care. If you have questions or want to talk more about your rights and responsibilities, please talk with a member of your health care team or the Patient Relations team.

# Resources

## Patient Education Resources

- Find patient information pamphlets:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

## Subject guides

- A collection of health care information created by health care professionals to help patients and the public better understand their health:
  - › <https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

## 811

- You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to talk with a registered nurse about your non-emergency health care questions.
  - › Phone: 811



This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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