

Your child's test to check the lining of the large bowel (colonoscopy)

This leaflet is about a test called a colonoscopy. It is used to check the lining of your child's large bowel or colon in detail. The leaflet explains what you should do before your child's procedure, on the day of the procedure and when you return home.

Your child's procedure

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test that allows your child's doctor to look closely at the lining of the large bowel (colon). The doctor uses a thin, flexible tube called an endoscope with a light and small camera on the end. They put this tube through the bottom (anus) and then slowly push it throughout the large bowel.

Your child has the procedure under a general anaesthetic. This is a medicine that makes them sleep and stops them feeling any pain during the procedure.

Before your child's procedure

What needs to happen before my child's procedure?

Your child needs to have a pre-admission assessment before their procedure. This assessment may take place face to face or online. We make sure that your child is ready for an anaesthetic and surgery.

After the pre-admission assessment, our admissions team contacts you by letter, text message or phone. We offer you a date for your child's procedure.

We also explain when your child should stop eating and drinking (fast) before their procedure. For us to have a clear view, the bowel must be empty. We give you a separate leaflet with details about what your child can eat and drink before the test. The leaflet also explains when to give your child medicines called laxatives to help them empty their bowel.

Please tell us if your child takes any medicines regularly. This includes medicines that you buy for your child from a pharmacy or shop and herbal or homeopathic medicines. We also need to know if your child is allergic to any medicines.

Your child needs to continue taking any routine medicines, unless the doctor tells you otherwise.

Do I need to get pain medicine ready for my child?

We do not routinely give you paracetamol (a painkiller) or ibuprofen (an anti-inflammatory medicine) to take home for your child after day surgery. Your child may have mild tummy discomfort after a colonoscopy. This side effect usually settles quickly and your child is unlikely to need pain medicine.

On the day of the procedure

When you arrive at the children's day surgery unit

We give you a time to arrive at the Evelina London children's day surgery unit. It is important that you arrive at the correct time and have followed the fasting and bowel preparation instructions for your child. If you arrive late or have not followed these instructions, we may not be able to do the procedure.

You and your child meet the gastroenterology and anaesthetic teams on the admissions ward before the procedure. We confirm that you have given your permission (consent) for the procedure. You can ask us any questions that you may have.

During the procedure

We give your child a general anaesthetic. This is a medicine that makes your child sleep and stops them feeling any pain during the procedure. You can stay with your child until they are asleep. Please see our separate leaflet called "Your child's general anaesthetic" for details.

When your child is asleep, the doctor passes the endoscope into their bottom. This tube is as thin as a little finger and has a light and small camera at one end. The doctor slowly pushes the endoscope throughout the large bowel, usually as far as the appendix. They then carefully examine the bowel as pictures from the inside of it appear on a television screen.

The doctor takes small pieces from the bowel called biopsies. They are about the size of a pinhead. After the procedure, we send the biopsies to a laboratory. Another doctor called a pathologist then examines them in detail under a microscope.

Are there any other treatment options to this procedure?

A few other tests are helpful, but thought to be less accurate than a colonoscopy. Some of them involve radiation. Doing a colonoscopy is the only way that we can look directly at the lining of your child's large bowel. It is also the only way that we can take samples or biopsies to help us make a diagnosis.

Other tests that can help us to investigate your child's symptoms include:

- ultrasound, X-ray, CT or MRI scans of the tummy area. These different types of scans can help us to look at the outside of your child's bowel and at the surrounding organs
- blood tests and tests on a sample of poo (stool sample). They can help us to find if your child's bowel works properly or is inflamed

Are there any risks to my child's procedure?

Every procedure has some risks of complications. To reduce these risks, we make sure that your child is well at the time of the procedure. We talk to you about the risks in the clinic and before the procedure when we confirm that we have your consent.

A colonoscopy is a very safe procedure and serious complications are rare. A complication happens in less than 0.5 to 1 out of 100 cases (the overall risk of any complication is less than 0.5 to 1%).

Sometimes, the tube used during the test (endoscope) can damage the lining of the bowel. This can cause:

- bleeding
- infection
- very rarely, a tear (perforation)

If there is any complication during the procedure, your child might need more treatment.

Sometimes, we may not be able to finish the test or do it at all. This can happen if, for example, the laxatives did not empty your child's bowel completely. In this case, we may need to repeat the test or suggest a different procedure.

After your child's procedure

How will my child look and feel after their procedure?

Your child may feel drowsy after their procedure and sleep for a while. They may be restless (agitated) and upset for up to an hour after waking up from the procedure. Some children may feel or be sick (vomit), or feel a bit full and uncomfortable (bloating).

Will my child be in pain after their procedure?

After a colonoscopy, your child may feel uncomfortable and have mild tummy discomfort. These side effects usually settle quickly.

When can my child eat and drink or feed after their procedure?

Your child should be able to eat and drink or feed as usual within 1 to 2 hours of the procedure.

Do we see the doctor after my child's procedure?

Yes, you see the doctor after the procedure. They explain the findings of the colonoscopy. Sometimes, the doctor might be able to show you pictures of your child's gut.

It usually takes 2 to 4 weeks before we get the biopsy results. However, your child may start taking medicines or having treatment based on what the doctor has seen during the procedure.

When can my child go home?

Your child can go home on the same day as their procedure when they:

- feel comfortable
- can manage (tolerate) their usual food and drink
- are not feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- are behaving as they usually do

Please supervise your child carefully on the journey home. According to the sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) guidelines, it is best to avoid long car journeys for babies under 1 year of age. If you travel home by car, it is important that:

- you stop for frequent breaks to feed your baby and change their position
- an adult sits with the baby in the back of the car

After you go home

How do I care for my child at home after their procedure?

The doctor or a member of their team gives you specific instructions on caring for your child after the procedure. They explain the arrangements for their follow-up care.

It is important to make sure that your child drinks plenty of fluids.

For the first 24 hours after having a general anaesthetic, it is best for your child to rest at home. They need to avoid activities like riding a bicycle or playing sports while the general anaesthetic wears off. Young adults must not drive a car, operate machinery or make important decisions for the first 24 hours.

Your child should be able to return to their usual activities, including going to nursery, school or work, 24 hours after the test.

Do I need to look for any symptoms after my child's procedure?

Contact a GP or go to your nearest emergency department (A&E) immediately if you feel that your child is unwell or they:

- get severe pain in the tummy
- have a high temperature (fever)
- are being sick (vomiting)
- are passing large amounts of blood

Your child may have a small amount of bleeding from the bottom if we took a bowel sample (biopsy) or removed a growth (polyp). This is common and should settle within 24 hours. However, it is important to get medical help if there is heavy bleeding from the bottom or the bleeding becomes worse.

If you go to your child's GP surgery or A&E, please take the report that we give you after the test with you.

Do you see my child again after their procedure?

A doctor at the hospital phones you when the biopsy results from the laboratory are available. This usually takes 2 to 4 weeks but can sometimes be longer.

Based on the results, we plan how to manage your child's symptoms and arrange a follow-up appointment if needed.

Contact us

If you **cannot keep your appointment**, contact our admissions team, **phone** 020 7188 9098, **email** gst-tr.paediatricadmissions@nhs.net

If your child has a **cough, cold or high temperature** in the 2 weeks before the procedure, contact our pre-assessment team, **phone** 020 7188 7188 extension 58209

If you have any **concerns between 7am and 9pm** about your child's surgery, call the children's day surgery unit, **phone** 020 7188 5300

If you have any **concerns between 9pm and 7am** about your child's surgery, call the Savannah ward through the main switchboard, **phone** 020 7188 7188

If you have any **concerns from 24 hours after surgery** about your child's health, contact your child's specialist surgical team or GP surgery, or **phone** NHS 111

If you are concerned that your child is **seriously unwell** at any time, go to your nearest A&E or **phone** 999

For more information on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **web** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline, **phone** 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm **email** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), **phone** 020 7188 8801 **email** pals@gstt.nhs.uk. To make a complaint, contact the patient resolution team **phone** 020 7188 3514 **email** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your child's care in a different language or format, please get in touch, **phone** 020 7188 8815 **email** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers. They are supported by experienced nurses and paramedics, **phone** 111 (24 hours a day) **web** www.111.nhs.uk

NHS website

This website gives information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare. It can help you to take care of your child's health and wellbeing, **web** www.nhs.uk



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