

# Colorectal / Lower Gastrointestinal patient pathway

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

### Introduction

You have been referred urgently to Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust because your GP feels your symptoms need investigation to rule out any serious conditions, including cancer. You will be under the care of a specialist colorectal medical and nursing team at the Trust.

### What you need to do:

- Please be available within the next 2 weeks for appointments
- Make sure your GP has up to date contact details for you, including your mobile phone number
- It is important that you keep your appointments. If you are unable to attend, please telephone us as soon as possible on this number: **020 3312 3665**
- Please have a list of your current medications with you as we will need to know what they are
- If you need an interpreter, please let the hospital know in advance (if you need a translation you can usually inform us on the day but if you require a sign language interpreter then for this we do require advance notice to arrange this for you).

Please help us to help you by being as flexible as possible with appointments.

### Appointment reminder

*Please make a note of upcoming appointments as a reminder*

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## Patient pathway

### Referral

The GP will refer you to Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

### Telephone appointment

The nurse specialist / consultant nurse will call you and carry out a telephone assessment, usually within 4 working days of the GP referring you. They will ask you questions about your symptoms and then book you for the most appropriate test. In most cases you will **not** need to be seen in clinic at the hospital but, if the nurse feels an appointment is needed instead of a telephone call, they will arrange for you to see either a specialist nurse or doctor in the outpatient clinic.

### Investigations

You may be booked for one or more of the following tests, which the nurse/team will explain to you in further detail. Your investigations will be done within 14 working days of us receiving your referral.

Colonoscopy

Flexible sigmoidoscopy

Outpatient appointment

CT colonography

OGD

MRI scan

### Results

After your test results have been reviewed, you will either; be referred back to your GP, invited to have further tests or offered an outpatient appointment. A letter will go to your GP with your results within 14 working days of your test. A copy will also be sent to you.

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## Following referral from your GP

Once you have been referred to the hospital, you will have a telephone appointment with a specialist nurse or consultant nurse. It is ideal if the time and date of the telephone call are confirmed with you before you leave the GP surgery. Please allow 15 minutes before and after the agreed call time in case we are able to call early or are running late due to clinical commitments. .

It is very important that you answer this phone call as you will need to confirm the following information:

- details of your symptoms
- information about any pre-existing medical conditions
- a list of medication you may be taking
- agree a suitable date/ time for any tests or an outpatient appointment

## Outpatient appointment

If an outpatient appointment is necessary instead of the telephone assessment this will be organised for you. It will be with a doctor or nurse, who specialises in the care that you require, held in an outpatient area. We will send you a letter confirming the details of where, when and who you will be seen by at this appointment.

## What tests might I be sent for?

### Colonoscopy

A Colonoscopy is a day case procedure to examine the lining of the bowel for abnormalities. A narrow, flexible, telescopic video camera is passed through your rectum (back passage) into the bowel and large intestine. The bowel needs to be completely empty, so you will be asked to follow a careful diet and take the laxatives provided to clear the bowel.

### CT colonography

CT colonography uses a CT scanner to look at your bowel and the rest of the abdominal organs. A narrow, flexible tube will be placed into your rectum (back passage) so that your bowel can be gently inflated with carbon dioxide gas. A computer creates images of your bowel, which will be reviewed by an expert who looks for abnormalities. To ensure good quality images are produced you will be asked to follow a careful diet and take the laxatives provided to clear the bowel.

### Flexible sigmoidoscopy

Flexible sigmoidoscopy is an outpatient procedure that is used to look inside the lower part of your large bowel. A narrow, flexible telescopic video camera is passed through your rectum (back passage) into the bowel and large intestine. The bowel needs to be empty so you will be given an enema (an enema is a way of passing fluid into the rectum which stimulates the bowel to work) to use before the examination.

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## OGD

An OGD is a day case procedure which allows the doctor to look directly at the lining of the oesophagus (throat), the stomach and around the first bend of the small intestine. In order to do the test, a narrow flexible, telescopic camera (endoscope) is passed through your mouth into the stomach. It has a bright light and video camera at the end to give the endoscopist a clear view of the lining of the stomach. This can be done using a local anaesthetic.

## MRI scan

An MRI scan is an imaging technique used to take pictures of the anatomy and physiological processes of the body, using strong magnetic fields.

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)