

# Colonoscopy for Children

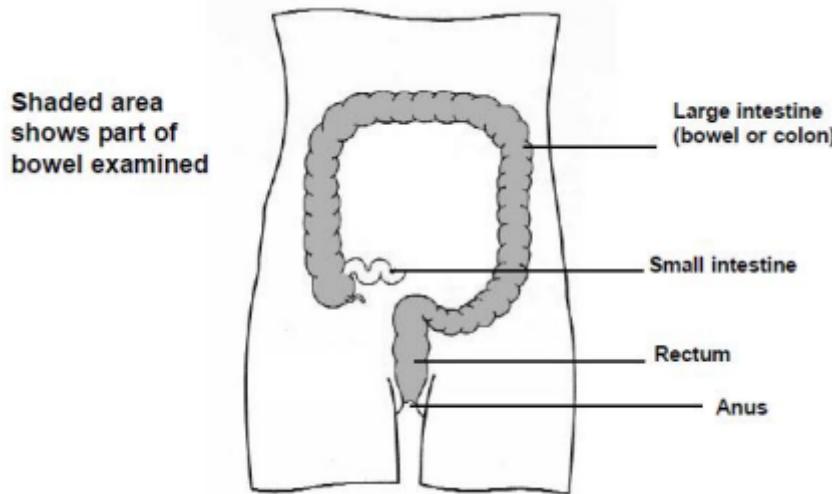
## Department of Paediatric Gastroenterology & Nutrition Information leaflet for parents and carers

This leaflet provides guidance about your child's colonoscopy and what you can expect when you come to hospital.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for your child.

### What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a camera test which allows a paediatric gastroenterologist to directly view your child's large intestine (bowel or colon). During the procedure, biopsies (tiny tissue samples from the lining of the gut) are usually taken to be looked at under a microscope.



### Why should my child have a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy may assist in identifying the cause of your child's bowel problems, exclude other problems and help reach a diagnosis.

### Are there any alternatives?

It depends. If you choose for your child to not have a colonoscopy, your doctor may not be able to reach a diagnosis. It may also possibly delay diagnosis and treatment.

Please discuss this further with your doctor.

## How can I prepare my child for a colonoscopy?

A clear view of the large intestine is required for this examination to be successful and so it must be as empty as possible. Your child will be prescribed laxatives to help empty their bowel. It is important to start this medication the **day before the colonoscopy and to take them as instructed**. Depending upon your child's age, they may need to follow specific dietary restrictions (please see leaflet "additional information for colonoscopy").

If your child is taking regular oral medication, this MUST be taken prior to the procedure.

**Clear fluids are permitted one hour prior to the procedure and this also applies to essential medications.** In the one hour before the colonoscopy your child MUST remain nil by mouth. If you have any questions relating to your child's medications, please contact the gastroenterology Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) in advance of the colonoscopy admission date (see further information at the end of this leaflet).

## What happens on the day of the colonoscopy?

Please arrive at Jungle Ward at your instructed time (depending upon if your child's colonoscopy is booked for a morning or afternoon theatre list). Jungle ward is located on the **first floor in Lanesborough wing**. A nurse will check your child's details, including medications and allergies. The anaesthetist will talk to you regarding your child's general anaesthetic and answer any questions you may have. Trained hospital play specialists are available on Jungle ward to help prepare your child for their colonoscopy.

In some situations you may be asked to bring your child to the ward a day before the procedure. Each case is assessed on an individual basis and you will be instructed in advance if your child needs to be admitted a day before their colonoscopy.

## Asking for your consent

The doctor carrying out the colonoscopy will explain the procedure again and a parent will be asked to sign a consent form. It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your child's care. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If applicable, your child may be asked for a urine sample pregnancy test. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

## What are the risks?

A colonoscopy is considered a safe, "low-risk" procedure but it does have some risks and possible complications of which to be aware:

- Abdominal **bloating**.
- Feeling sick up to 24 hours after the anaesthetic.
- When a biopsy is taken there may be **bleeding** on rare occasions.
- **Perforation**, which is a tear in the wall of large bowel. This is very rare (approximately 1 in 1000 cases) for a diagnostic colonoscopy and if suspected, our onsite paediatric surgeons would be called to assess and help with management. The risk of perforation is higher with a therapeutic colonoscopy (e.g. removal of polyp/s).

## What happens during the colonoscopy?

Under a general anaesthetic, a thin flexible tube with a small camera and light is passed into your child's rectum (bottom) and is guided through their large intestine. Biopsies (tiny samples of gut lining) can be taken if needed. The procedure takes between 30 to 45 minutes.

## Will my child feel any pain?

The procedure is painless for your child and is performed whilst your child is asleep under general anaesthesia.

## What happens after the colonoscopy?

Following the procedure your child will be taken to the recovery area where they will be monitored. Once your child has recovered, he or she will be able to get dressed and have refreshments. The doctor who performed the procedure will inform you of the colonoscopy findings and give you and the nurse looking after your child a plan. Most patients can be discharged on the same day. The hospital discharge paperwork will be sent to you, your GP and your child's referring doctor (if applicable).

Your child's nurse will also give you some important discharge advice. In most cases, your child will be safely discharged from hospital and can go home the same day.

Please allow four to six hours in the hospital for the whole process (admission to discharge) to be completed.

## What do I need to do after I go home?

Your child will need to be observed at home for at least 12 hours by a responsible adult.

## What shall I do if my child feels unwell after the procedure?

If within working hours, please contact the paediatric gastroenterology clinical nurse specialist (CNS): **020 8725 5050** or [gastro.cns@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:gastro.cns@stgeorges.nhs.uk).

If out of hours, please contact NHS 111 or attend your local emergency department for review.

## Will my child have a follow-up appointment?

Please note, the biopsy results will usually be available within four weeks. You will be contacted by your child's paediatric gastroenterologist with the results (this may be through means of a telephone consultation/outpatient clinic appointment/letter sent to your address) but please allow up to six weeks for this.

## Contact us

For further administrative queries please contact paediatric admissions: **020 8725 3648/2102**

For clinical queries, please contact the paediatric gastroenterology clinical nurse specialist (CNS): **020 8725 5050** or [gastro.cns@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:gastro.cns@stgeorges.nhs.uk)  
Jungle ward can be contacted on **020 8725 2034/5**.

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

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

