

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Undergoing CT colonography via a stoma (Omnipaque and Picolax)

You will need to collect a special preparation (Omnipaque) and a prescription from x-ray reception at either King's Mill Hospital or Newark Hospital, between Monday and Friday, 9am to 5pm, at least three days before your appointment. Please bring your appointment letter with you.

Your consultant has advised you to have a CT scan. This leaflet aims to explain the procedure and answer any queries you may have.

CT stands for Computed Tomography and simply refers to the technology of the equipment. CT is a scanning technique which uses x-rays to produce cross-sectional images of the relevant part of the body. It can be used to diagnose many conditions and monitor the success of treatment.

Important information before taking the preparation

Contact the radiology department before taking the preparation if you have:

- **An allergy to x-ray contrast or Picolax.**
- **Thyroid disease.**
- **Swallowing problems.**
- **Recent diverticulitis, ileus, toxic colitis, or toxic megacolon.**
- **Possible pregnancy.**

This leaflet explains how to prepare for your **CT colonography scan** and what to expect on the day of your appointment.

Your doctor has referred you for this test to examine your large bowel. If you have any concerns about the test, please speak to the doctor who referred you.

Important

You must follow the strict diet outlined in the separate sheet at the end of this leaflet and take the Omnipaque and Picolax as instructed. This is to ensure your bowel is thoroughly clean for this examination.

If you have any questions regarding the preparation for this scan, please contact the CT department on 01623 622515, extension 3212.

We aim to see you at your appointment time but please remember emergency patients are scanned as priority. Should there be a delay the reasons will be explained to you.

If you need **transport** to the hospital, please contact your GP to arrange this. Although the actual scan time is only 30 to 45 minutes, you will need to allow 1 ½ hours for this appointment.

Please leave any valuables at home. You are responsible for all personal items you bring into hospital, and the Trust cannot accept responsibility for their loss or damage.

What is CT colonography?

- This test uses CT scanner to take detailed pictures of your large bowel.
- Also shows other abdominal organs.
- CT Colonography is well tolerated and less invasive than a colonoscopy, however, because it's a scan (not a camera test), we **can't take biopsies or remove polyps** during the procedure. You may still need a camera test should polyps be found.

Special advice

Please bring a spare stoma bag with you for after the procedure.

You may experience frequent, loose bowel motions and diarrhoea within a few hours of the first dose of preparation, therefore, **please be aware your stoma bag may need changing more frequently**. Some abdominal discomfort can be expected.

Diabetes

Contact your diabetes specialist team before starting the preparation.

Contraceptive pill

Diarrhoea caused by the preparation may reduce the effectiveness of the pill. Use **additional contraception for the rest of the cycle**.

Other medications

Diarrhoea caused by the preparation may reduce the effectiveness of some medications. If you have concerns this should be discussed with your referrer.

Preparing for the scan

You will take **five doses of bowel preparation** to empty the bowel and allow clear images during the scan.

Picolax (bowel preparation)

You have been given **Picolax**, an oral bowel cleansing preparation to clear your bowel before the test. There is a small risk of dehydration, low blood pressure, or kidney problems. The clinician who referred you has assessed your risk and confirmed this preparation is appropriate for you.

How to prepare Picolax:

- Mix **one sachet** with **150 ml of cold water** in a large measuring jug.
- The mixture may become warm. **Allow it to cool before drinking**.

Please drink an additional cup of fluid (water or squash) each hour after drinking Picolax while you are awake.

Omnipaque (contrast agent)

This is a contrast medium used to tag any remaining stool and coat the bowel to improve scan images.

Important:

- Expect **significant diarrhoea** effects during this period.
- Drink plenty of clear fluids.
- Mild abdominal discomfort is normal.
- We encourage you to drink plenty of clear fluids over the period as you may get dehydrated.

When to seek medical advice

If you develop **symptoms of dehydration** and cannot increase your fluid intake, seek medical advice. Symptoms include:

- Dizziness or feeling light-headed when standing.
- Excessive thirst.
- Passing less urine than usual.

What happens during the scan?

You will be asked to change into a gown. A radiographer will take you into the scan room and explain the procedure to you in more detail, should you have any worries the staff will put you at ease and answer all your queries.

You are required to lie on a couch which will move through the large 'doughnut' shaped scanner. Your body will never be totally enclosed, and you will be able to communicate with the CT staff through an intercom system. The scanner couch can be lowered and patients with mobility problems will be offered assistance.

For this scan it is necessary to insert a cannula (a small plastic tube), through which an injection is given, into a vein in your arm. This will allow us to inject a special fluid called contrast medium to allow us to see the blood vessels more clearly. We will also use this cannula to inject a drug which relaxes the bowel.

A small tube will be inserted into the stoma to allow us to fill your bowel with air. You need to lie very still on your back while the scan is in progress, and we will ask you to hold your breath for a short time. We will then ask you to turn into different positions to enable us to do further scans.

Following the procedure

You may eat and drink normally. A high-fibre diet will help restore your normal bowel habit which will usually return within a couple of days.

Risks from the procedure

To minimise any risks, you will be asked a series of questions before the scan.

A small number of patients suffer allergic type reactions to the contrast medium so you will need to remain in the department for up to 20 minutes following your scan. Such reactions are usually minor and settle quite quickly without treatment.

The injection of the bowel relaxant may cause blurring of vision, but this normally clears within half an hour. Very rarely the injection can cause pain in the eye. If this does occur, please go to your nearest Emergency Department immediately.

Although x-rays are used to produce the images, a CT scan is considered to be a very safe procedure. Any slight risk from the use of x-rays is outweighed by the information provided by the scan. A very rare risk is a tear in the bowel wall, known as a perforation, which happens to around one in 3000 patients.

Getting your results

When your scan is finished no instant diagnosis can be made. The images produced are recorded digitally and reviewed by a radiologist (an x-ray doctor) who then sends a report to your hospital consultant. The results of your scan will be discussed with you at your next clinic appointment. If you have not received your follow-up appointment within four weeks, please contact your consultant's patient coordinator. .

Your radiology records

This Trust is part of a group of NHS hospitals in the East Midlands that have a shared NHS radiology system, which is used by healthcare professionals to access your radiology records.

If necessary, your radiology records may also be accessed by healthcare professionals in other NHS hospitals in the East Midlands or NHS services providers to ensure you receive consistent, safe, and effective clinical care and treatment, irrespective of where you receive your care. If you have any concerns about providing information or how we use it, please discuss this with radiology staff so that you fully understand the potential impact on your care or treatment.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns, or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office Leaflet code: PIL202608-01-CTSOP Created: August 2026 / Review Date: August 2028

Low-residue diet foods before your scan

Foods you can eat:

- White bread or toast.
- Rice Krispies® / Cornflakes.
- Eggs.
- White rice or pasta.
- Chicken or white fish.
- Cottage cheese or plain yoghurt.
- Plain biscuits.
- Clear jelly or ice cream.
- Clear soup/Bovril.



Do not eat:

- Wholemeal bread.
- Wholegrain cereals.
- Fruit and vegetables.
- Nuts and dried fruit.
- Brown rice or wholemeal pasta.
- Red meat.
- Thick soups.



Four days before

STOP taking:

- Iron tablets.
- Codeine.
- Loperamide.
- Fibre supplements (Fybogel, Isogel).

You should continue all other regular medication including laxatives whilst you are taking Picolax.

Two days before

Follow a low-residue diet only. Drink plenty of fluids.

One day before

 8am **Drink before low-residue breakfast.**
Drink 50 ml Omnipaque (may add squash).
Prepare one sachet of **Picolax** with 150 ml water.

 1pm Low-residue lunch only.
After lunch **clear fluids only**.

Please turn over

 4pm Prepare one sachet of **Picolax** with 150 ml water.
Continue drinking clear fluids.
Stay near a toilet.

 8pm **Drink 25 ml Omnipaque** (you may add squash).

Please continue to drink plenty of clear fluids throughout the evening, which include water, squash, broths, juices, teas, or coffee **without** milk

On the morning of your test

 6am **Drink 25 ml Omnipaque** (you may add squash).

No solid food - clear fluids only unless you are told otherwise.

Examples of clear fluids:

- Water.
- Squash/fizzy drinks.
- Clear soup/stock drink.
- Black tea or coffee.