



What to Expect Before your Screening Colonoscopy

What does a positive screening test mean?

A positive result does not necessarily mean you have cancer. It means that there was blood detected in your bowel motion. This *may* be caused by polyps or cancer, but there are other causes such as haemorrhoids. It is important that your bowel is checked.

What happens next?

Your GP has sent a referral to the CCDHB Bowel Screening Nurses, informing them that you require a screening colonoscopy. *Colonoscopy* is a test where a thin tube with a camera on the end is passed into your bottom to check for any problems in the large bowel.

The Bowel Screening Nurses will contact you by telephone **within 5 working days** to check you are safe to have a colonoscopy, and arrange an appointment. They will explain the bowel preparation and what to expect on the day.

What should I do now?

The nurse will ask about your general health, any medical conditions you have and what medications you are taking. They will also ask about your family history.

It will be helpful to have this information ready for the phone call.

- Your medical and surgical health history
- Your current medications (including over-the counter medicines)
- Details of your family cancer history

Why are you asking about my family history?

Some people are at increased risk of bowel cancer and this is a good opportunity to find these people. If we think your family is at increased risk we will talk to you more about what this means.

You will be asked about your family history of bowel and associated cancers, including endometrial, ovarian, stomach, brain and bladder cancer and if any relative has had multiple polyps found at colonoscopy. The nurses need to know what relation the family member is to you, their age when they had cancer, and what cancer they had.

Please be prepared with this information if it is applicable to you.

How long will I have to wait for my Colonoscopy?

We aim to perform your colonoscopy **within 45 working days of your positive screening test result.**

The Bowel Screening Nurses will offer you the first appointment available. You can ask for an alternative appointment if this is unsuitable for you.

Where will I have my Colonoscopy?

Most bowel screening colonoscopies will be carried out at Kenepuru Hospital in Porirua.

The bowel screening nurse will inform you if you need to have your colonoscopy done in Wellington Hospital. This is dependent on certain health history criteria, not patient choice.

When will I get the results?

After the colonoscopy, the doctor will talk to you about the results before you go home that day.

The doctor may take biopsies during the colonoscopy to send to the laboratory in order to check for cancer cells. Generally these results will be available within one to two weeks and will be provided to you by letter (a copy will also be sent to your GP). If any further action is needed we will let you know.

What if I have more questions?

Please write down any questions you have to ask the nurse. You will also be able to ask questions on the day of your colonoscopy.

Thank you for taking part in the National Bowel Screening Programme

For more information about the National Bowel Screening Programme:

Visit: www.timetoscreen.nz

Or talk to your doctor

