

## Colorectal Telephone Assessment Service

A guide to what will happen now that your GP has referred you to the Specialist Colorectal (bowel) Team

This booklet contains some of the questions you might have about your referral for bowel problems. It will also explain what to expect when you are contacted by us and following this when you attend the hospital for your tests/appointment.

If there are words that you don't understand please refer to the glossary.

### Contact information

#### Colorectal Unit Department of Surgery

Colorectal Nurse Specialists  
T: 020 3315 2092/8354

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## Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have concerns or wish to give feedback about services, your care or treatment, you can contact the PALS office on the Ground Floor of the hospital just behind the main reception.

Alternatively, you can send us your comments or suggestions on one of our comment cards, available at the PALS office, or on a feedback form on our website [www.chelwest.nhs.uk/pals](http://www.chelwest.nhs.uk/pals).

We value your opinion and invite you to provide us with feedback.

T: 020 3315 6727  
E: [pals@chelwest.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@chelwest.nhs.uk)

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**Speak to your clinician**



# Colorectal Telephone Assessment Service

## Information for patients



Chelsea and Westminster Hospital **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

## Have you got bowel symptoms?

Your GP has referred you to the hospital to have a test or see a bowel specialist. We know that bowels are an embarrassing subject and no one likes to discuss them. The specialist bowel team at the hospital, known as the Colorectal Team, are very used to this subject. Try not to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about discussing your symptoms or asking them any questions.

## What happens now?

You will be contacted by the hospital appointments team confirming a date and time for a **telephone assessment appointment**.

Prior to your appointment you will receive a reminder text to expect a call within the next 30 minutes. A Colorectal Nurse Specialist will call you on the number that you supplied at the specified date and time of your telephone assessment appointment.

**IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you are free to talk at the time of your phone call and that you are in a quiet and private location so you can talk freely.**

## YOU DO NOT NEED TO ATTEND THE HOSPITAL FOR THIS TELEPHONE APPOINTMENT.

During this telephone call you will be asked questions about your health, your symptoms and your personal circumstances and advised what test you need to have. You will then be sent an appointment for this test via post.

It is helpful to the specialist to think about your symptoms carefully before your telephone assessment.

Most people with bowel symptoms do not have cancer but it is important to have your symptoms checked out. The cause can be something benign (non-cancerous) like piles or irritable bowel syndrome. If you do have piles these can sometimes be treated in the outpatient or endoscopy department.

If you are unsure about something or do not understand what you are told please ask for clarification.

## What test am I likely to need?

Different tests provide different information about your bowels. The most common tests that the bowel team use include:

- Flexible sigmoidoscopy
- Colonoscopy
- CT scan
- MRI scan
- Ultra sound scan

Descriptions of these different tests can be found in the glossary at the end of this leaflet.

Following your telephone assessment, most patients will be referred straight for one of these tests. Full details of the test and your appointment will be sent to you via post.

In some cases, however, we may ask patients to come in to the out-patient department first to see the specialist.

## What if I choose not to have the tests that are recommended?

You will have an opportunity to discuss any concerns with the Colorectal Specialist during your telephone assessment appointment.

If following this you do not feel you want to proceed with the tests, we recommend you discuss your concerns with your GP.

## What happens after I have my investigation or test?

We hope to be able to tell patients what is causing their symptoms and to discuss treatment shortly after their tests.

Some patients may require additional tests including blood tests or further X-rays, endoscopy tests or scans (see glossary).

If the test was carried out in the x-ray department you will

be contacted by the bowel team either by telephone or letter within a week of your test.

If you are concerned you have not heard from us you can contact the team on:

**Tel: 020 3315 2092 or 0203 315 8354**

## Glossary of terms

**Colo-** refers to the large bowel (known as the Colon)

**Colonoscopy** is a thin flexible telescope with a camera on the end that is inserted into the bowel via the back passage and the whole of the large bowel is examined. Patients are sent some strong laxative medication to take the day before this test and given a sedative injection for this test.

**Computerised Axial Tomogram or CT scan** is a special scan where a doughnut shaped X-ray machine takes cross sectional x-ray pictures of you while you lie on a table. Patients are given a special dye injection and asked to drink some special contrast fluid when you come in for this test. Patients may be asked to take some laxative medication or fast before this test.

**Flexible sigmoidoscopy** is a thin flexible telescope with a camera on the end that is inserted into the bowel via the back passage and the lower part of the large bowel is examined.

**Magnetic Resonance Imagine or MRI scan** involves lying in an open ended metal cylinder while detailed x-ray pictures are taken.

**Ultrasound** is an examination of the abdomen performed by running a probe over the abdominal wall.