

He aha kei roto i te
aromatawai kōpiro?

What does a colonoscopy involve?

A guide for communities in Aotearoa.



At a glance...

- During a colonoscopy, the lining of your large intestine or bowel is examined using a colonoscope (a long, flexible tube with a camera inside it) to see if there are polyps or a cancerous tumour in the bowel.
- If the specialist sees anything that needs further investigation, photographs and samples (biopsies) are taken for further testing.
- A sigmoidoscopy or CT colonography (also known as a virtual colonoscopy) are other diagnostic tools that can be used to check the bowel.

“I’m so glad my family encouraged me to have a colonoscopy as it caught my bowel cancer early when it was still treatable.”

LOLOMA (PATRICK) AFEAKI,
BOWEL CANCER SURVIVOR

Getting prepared for a colonoscopy

Before your colonoscopy, you’ll need to follow special dietary restrictions and take laxative medications to ensure your bowel is completely empty – you’ll receive instructions on how to do this. You must follow these carefully so your bowel is clear and the specialist can see the lining of your bowel during the colonoscopy.

What happens during a colonoscopy?

Once you’re ready for your colonoscopy, a specially trained doctor will insert a colonoscope into your bottom and move it up the bowel to the far end. The colonoscope has a camera and light within it and is projected onto a TV screen so the doctor can see the bowel. If they see any

polyps (abnormal growths on the bowel wall), or areas of abnormality, they can take biopsies and photos. In most cases, polyps can be removed through the scope, which reduces the risk of cancer developing.

A colonoscopy can be a bit uncomfortable at times. However, your doctor can give you some sedation if you wish. The whole procedure will take around 20-45mins.

After a colonoscopy:

You’ll be able to rest, and if you had sedation during the procedure, you might sleep a little afterwards. Your doctor or nurse will talk to you about your colonoscopy results and explain any follow-up instructions. If you had sedation, you would need someone to take you home and look after you until it’s safe to be by yourself.



Want to know more?

You can find more information on our website:
bowelcancernz.org.nz > About bowel cancer
> Early detection and prevention
> Tests and investigations



Helpful tip

A specialist nurse will tell you what a colonoscopy involves and explain the bowel preparation you’ll need to undertake before having the procedure.



NEED SUPPORT?

Contact our bowel cancer support nurse:
Email: here4you@bowelcancernz.org.nz
Phone: 0800 BCNZ NURSE (226 968)

Join our private Facebook group:
bowelcancernz.org.nz > Support > Finding Support

CONTACT US

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