

A PRACTICAL
GUIDE FOR
MANAGING ON
YOUR OWN

PREPARING FOR A COLONOSCOPY

PREPARING, UNDERGOING, RECOVERING



STEADY COMPANION

www.steadycompanion.co.nz

INTRODUCTION

A colonoscopy is performed so often, it's almost routine. But to the patient, it can seem frightening and embarrassing, and you just want to get it over and done with.

This guide takes you through what to expect so you can feel more prepared, supported, and at ease.



The reality



Feeling nervous about having a colonoscopy is very common.

Many people feel anxious about:

- the embarrassment of your private parts being seen
- the bowel preparation
- needing the toilet
- having an accident
- travelling to the hospital while incontinent
- being all alone

The reassuring thing is that this procedure is done every day by experienced teams who understand exactly how patients feel.

Most people say afterwards that the worry was worse than the procedure itself.



What is a colonoscopy?



A colonoscopy is a procedure that allows a doctor to look inside the large bowel, using a thin, flexible camera.

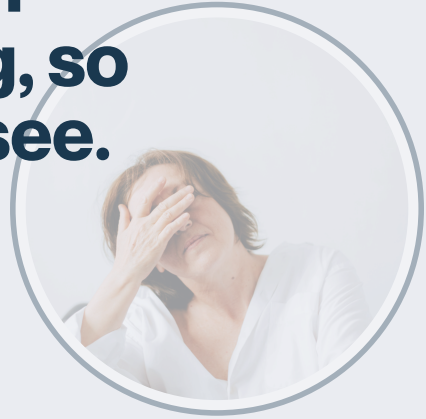
It helps

- investigate symptoms
- diagnose problems early
- remove small polyps
- prevent bowel cancer



The Preparation - bowel cleansing, so the doctor can see.

The worst part



You will be asked to:

- follow a low-fibre diet
- avoid seeds, nuts, grains, some fruits and vegetables
- drink a bowel-cleansing solution

You may experience:

- urgent, loose bowel movements
- cramping or gurgling
- very frequent, very urgent toilet visits
- tiredness or feeling washed out

This is unpleasant but temporary, and means it's working.



Fluids and Energy

This can make a real difference.



You may feel

- tired
- cold
- hungry
- emotional
- bloated

This is often from fluid loss.

Commonly allowed drinks:

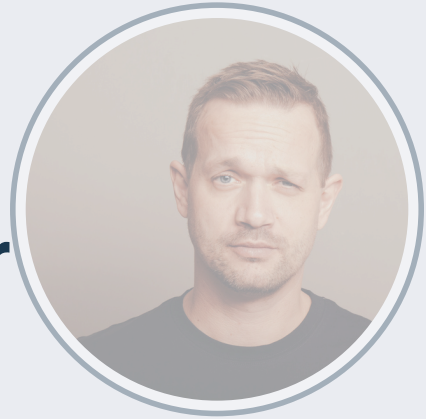
- Water
- apple juice
- electrolyte drinks
- clear soup
- lemonade
- black tea or coffee - no milk
- clear jelly, not red or purple

Stay hydrated and be gentle to yourself.

Check with your doctor about when you must stop ingesting *anything* before your procedure



Making it easier



Helpful things to have ready

- soft toilet paper
- wet wipes
- barrier cream such as zinc or Sudocrem
- Loose comfortable clothing you can quickly pull down (no belts or tight trousers)
- towel or pad nearby
- phone and charger to hand
- drinks you enjoy

Comfort tips

- use wet wipes rather than dry paper
- pat rather than wipe
- apply barrier cream early to save your skin
- stay close to the toilet



Travelling to Hospital

A very common worry

“What if I urgently need to go, on the way?”

Helpful steps:

- **don't drive yourself!**
- leave in plenty of time so you are not rushed
- wear dark, loose clothing
- consider wearing an incontinence pad for reassurance
- sit on a towel if helpful
- pack a small emergency bag

Emergency bag:

- spare underwear
- wet wipes
- tissues
- plastic bag
- small towel or pad

Most people get there without any problems.



What happens on the Day



You will

- be checked by nurses
- change into a gown
- have a small canula placed
- meet the doctor and give consent

Most people have sedation and feel sleepy and relaxed.

You will lie on your side and

a flexible camera tube called a colonoscope will be inserted through the rectum into the bowel so the doctor can examine the lining of the colon.

You may feel pressure or bloating, but no significant pain



What it's like afterwards



You will probably feel

- Sleepy and tired
- bloated and windy
- have mild cramping
- possibly a bit emotional

Air used during the procedure can cause wind for several hours. Gentle walking can help, or just hide yourself away.

It's a good idea to wear an incontinence pad on the trip home, just in case.

You may feel pressure or bloating, but no significant pain



Seek Medical Advice if



You have

- **severe pain**
- **heavy bleeding**
- **fever**
- **vomiting**
- **fainting**
- **a swollen, hard abdomen**



Steady Companion provides calm, practical, non-medical, discreet support before and after colonoscopies.



A companion for:

- transport
- companionship
- helping you get prepared
- settling in back at home
- overnight support

Where appropriate, and with insurer approval, a companion may be able to drive your own car.

This is not medical care. It is steady, capable support from someone who understands how these days can feel.



Steady Companion support may help if:



- you live alone
- family live far away
- friends are unavailable
- you feel anxious about managing on your own
- you've been told someone must accompany you

From a worried son in New Plymouth -
"My mother had a procedure in Wakefield Hospital, Wellington. I couldn't be there. Steady Companion met her at the hospital, took her home, and stayed through the afternoon and overnight. So when she got herself up at 2am and fell over, someone was right there - calm and competent. Knowing she wasn't alone gave us both great peace of mind."



Final Thoughts

It is pretty standard to feel worried about having a colonoscopy.

With preparation and the right support from a good friend, the day can feel much calmer and more manageable.



Take things slowly.
Ask for help when you need it.
Let people support you.



your checklist

A quick guide to help you feel ready.

Before the day:

- **Read instructions:** review all the guidelines
- **Get prepared:** Have your cleansing meds ready
- **Plan your transport:** to and from the hospital
- **Buy groceries:** prepare clear fluids and permitted foods
- **Setup room:** prepare a comfortable resting place

Comfort items

- **Wet wipes:** gentle cleaning during your preparation
- **Soft toilet paper:** helps prevent irritation and scratching
- **Barrier cream:** protects fragile skin from frequent wiping
- **Tissues:** extra soft for general use
- **Towels:** spare towel for protection
- **Incontinence pads:** can be ordered online, for privacy



your checklist

A quick guide to help you feel ready.

Travel Kit - prepare in advance

- **Underwear:** pack extra, just in case
- **Wet Wipes:** for quick cleanup on the go
- **Tissue:** Handy, very handy
- **Plastic Bag:** secure storage for soiled items
- **Small pad:** compact towel or pad for seating

Aftercare

- **Rest:** Stay home and rest your body
- **Hydrate:** Drink plenty of clear fluids regularly
- **Eat light:** Reintroduce simple, light foods slowly
- **No driving:** do not operate vehicles post procedure
- **Check in:** have someone check in with you first night

“One step at a time.”



We can help you

- **Get organised:** we can help with organising what you need for prep and for post procedure
- **Drive Car:** we can drive your car, to and from the hospital
- **Stay:** we can check-in with you or stay with you overnight

For a more comprehensive colonoscopy guide: contact:

info@caringstay.co.nz and we can email you

“One step at a time.”



Steady Companion

from CaringStay Limited

Your kind, strong supporter

We can drive your car for you.
We can stay with you overnight - we can make it work.

Connect with us!



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