

Straight to Test (STT) Specialist Team

Information for patients referred for urgent bowel symptoms

This leaflet is to explain what will happen now that your GP has referred you to the hospital's Straight to Test (STT) Specialist Team.

Why have I been referred?

Your GP suspects that you may have a problem with your bowels. This is why you have been referred to what we call a "suspected cancer lower gastro-intestinal pathway".

What will happen now?

You will receive either:

- a phone call from our STT specialist nurse within 48 hours of your GP sending the referral (except weekends and bank holidays).
- a text to notify you that a STT specialist nurse is trying to get in contact with you, or
- an outpatient appointment will be arranged with a colorectal surgical consultant, registrar or a specialist nurse.

We understand that bowels can often be an embarrassing subject and difficult to talk about. The nursing team are used to talking about it, so try not to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable when discussing your symptoms or asking any questions.

What test am I likely to have?

Different tests give us different information about you and your bowel. Our team will inform you during the telephone assessment or outpatient appointment what test will be best for you. This may be one of the following:

- **Colonoscopy** - a thin flexible telescope with a camera on the end that is inserted into the bowel via the back passage to examine the whole of the large bowel. You will require bowel preparation for this investigation.
- **Flexible sigmoidoscopy** - a thin flexible telescope with a camera on the end that is inserted into the bowel via the back passage to examine the lower end of the large bowel. You will require bowel preparation for this investigation.
- **CT colonography** - sometimes called virtual colonoscopy. This is a specialised computed tomography (CT) scan that produces very detailed pictures of the inside of the colon and rectum. The day before the test you will need to take a drink containing a special dye or perhaps a strong laxative.

- **CT CAP/AP** - A computed tomography (CT) scan used to scan the body to obtain detailed pictures of inside your body. A **CT CAP** looks at the chest, abdomen and pelvis, and a **CT AP** looks at the abdomen and pelvis.

What happens when I'm booked for any of the above procedures?

Colonoscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy - we will contact you with a date and time. You will require bowel preparation for the procedure to be carried out; this is to allow us to see your bowel clearly. It is designed to give you loose stools. You will be given further information on how to collect your bowel preparation and how to take it.

CT Colonography or CT AP/CAP - the radiology department will contact you regarding an appointment and will give you the instructions for the procedure and any preparation required.

What happens after the test?

Following your test, you may need an outpatient appointment, or you may receive a letter regarding your results, which will be shared with your GP.

Please speak to the STT specialist nurses if you have any questions or concerns on the telephone number below.

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Straight to Test Specialist Team:

- Telephone 01438 285470 or 01438 254733

Leaflet information

You can request this information in a different format or another language; please speak to your doctor or nurse.

Date of publication: March 2025

Version number: 1

Author: R Mostyn, E Mudyiwa

Reference: Colorectal

Review Date: March 2028

© East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust
www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk