Colonic Stent Insertion

Interventional Radiology

This leaflet provides information about the procedure, what to expect on the day, the potential risks and important information for afterwards.

Prior to the procedure, you will have a telephone consultation, where you will have the opportunity to ask further questions.

Please note that this leaflet is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor. You should raise any questions you may have with the doctor who has referred you or with the doctor who will be performing the procedure.

What is a colonic stent?

A colonic stent insertion is a procedure used to treat a narrowing (stricture) or blockage in the large bowel (colon).

A small metal mesh tube called a stent is placed inside the bowel to hold it open. This allows stool and gas to pass through more easily, relieving symptoms of bowel obstruction.

The procedure is usually performed using X-ray guidance, sometimes combined with endoscopy (a flexible camera), to accurately position the stent.

Colonic stents are commonly used:

- As a temporary measure before planned surgery
- To relieve symptoms in patients who are not suitable for surgery

Why do I need a colonic stent?

You may need a colonic stent if you have a narrowing or blockage in your bowel, most commonly caused by a tumour.

Symptoms of bowel obstruction may include:

- Abdominal pain and bloating
- Constipation or inability to pass stool
- Nausea and vomiting
- Reduced appetite

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A stent can help relieve these symptoms by reopening the bowel, improving comfort and allowing normal bowel function.

How do I prepare for a colonic stent?

You will have a pre-assessment telephone consultation with a nurse before your admission and may be asked to have blood tests before the procedure.

You should stop eating 6 hours prior the procedure, however you can drink 1 cup of clear water per hour until the procedure starts.

The procedure will take place in the Interventional Radiology (IR), within the Radiology Department at St. Peter's Hospital. When you arrive, you will be given a hospital gown to change into, and a nurse will insert an IV cannula.

The doctor will discuss the procedure with you; answer any questions you may have and ask you to sign a consent form if you are happy to proceed.

The procedure will likely be performed under local anaesthetic. Intravenous pain relief and light sedation may also be given, to ensure you are as comfortable as possible.

If you are feeling unwell closer to the day of the procedure, please let the team know.

Additional preparation may include:

- A CT scan to assess the bowel
- Enemas or bowel preparation in some cases

How is a colonic stent performed?

You will usually lie on an X-ray table.

The procedure may be performed using X-ray guidance alone or in combination with an endoscope (a flexible camera passed through the back passage).

A thin tube is carefully guided through the bowel to the site of the narrowing. Contrast dye is injected to outline the bowel and confirm the position of the blockage.

A guidewire is passed across the narrowing, and the stent is then advanced over the wire and positioned across the blockage. The stent is released and expands to open the bowel.

The procedure usually takes between 30 and 60 minutes.

What are the potential risks / complications of a colonic stent?

Colonic stent insertion is a commonly performed and generally safe procedure. However, as with all medical procedures, there are some risks:

Pain or discomfort

- Mild abdominal discomfort is common (up to 30%)
- Usually improves after the stent expands

Bowel perforation (tear in the bowel)

- Occurs in approximately 4-10% of patients
- This is a serious complication and may require emergency surgery

Stent migration (movement)

- The stent may move from its original position in around 5-10% of cases
- This may require repositioning or replacement

Re-blockage of the bowel

- Occurs in approximately 10-20% of patients over time
- May require further treatment or additional stenting

Bleeding

- Minor bleeding is relatively common and usually settles on its own
- Significant bleeding is uncommon (<1-2%)

Infection

- Infection is uncommon (<1-2%)
- Antibiotics may be required

Failure to place the stent

- In around 5-10% of cases, it may not be possible to safely position the stent

Radiation exposure

- The procedure uses X-ray guidance
- Radiation dose is kept as low as reasonably achievable

What happens afterwards?

After the procedure, you will be monitored in a recovery area.

- Your blood pressure, pulse, and comfort will be monitored
- You may be allowed to start drinking fluids and gradually return to eating
- Some patients can go home the same day, while others may stay overnight

You should:

- Follow dietary advice provided by your clinical team
- Avoid constipation (you may be given laxatives)
- Gradually return to normal activities as you feel able

Seek urgent medical advice if you experience:

- Severe abdominal pain
- Abdominal swelling or bloating
- Vomiting
- Fever or signs of infection
- Inability to pass stool or gas

Follow-up will be arranged with your referring team to monitor your progress and plan any further treatment if needed.

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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You can use Text Relay to turn telephone communications into text. Use the Relay UK app on your phone, tablet or PC. You can also use Relay UK via Minicom or Uniphone.

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اگر آپ اس کا اردو زبان میں ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم اس فون نمبر 01932 723553 پر رابطہ کریں

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

আপনার অনুবাদের দরকার হলে এখানে যোগাযোগ করুন : 01932 723553

यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

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