

Having your bottom examined

To examine your bottom the doctor will first look at the skin around your anus and then feel the outside and inside of the anus with a finger using a plastic glove and lubricating jelly.

For most people this is uncomfortable but not painful. If it is painful, tell the doctor at once. After this the doctor will use a narrow plastic tube to examine the inside of your bottom. The tube is gently inserted into your anus and then a light is shone through the tube so that the doctor can see the lining of your anus and lower bowel.

This usually takes less than a minute. If the lining of the bowel looks inflamed then the doctor can take a sample through the tube without causing pain. The sample can then be looked at in the laboratory.

For people who have piles, treatments such as injections or banding can often be done through a tube in the clinic too. (see piles leaflet for details).

After the examination the doctor will wipe any remaining lubricating jelly from your skin before you dress.

After the clinic visit

Many people who come to the colorectal clinic can be diagnosed with conditions such as piles and be given treatment immediately. However some people need more tests to examine more of the bowel, for example using a flexible steerable tube (flexible sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy) or a special CT scan.

If you need one of these additional tests you can usually arrange the date for this test and a date to come back to clinic for the results if necessary, before you leave the clinic.

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Visiting the colorectal clinic

A patient's guide



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...the hospital of choice for local people 

What is the colorectal clinic?

The colorectal clinic is a specialist clinic for patients who have problems with their bowels or their bottom. The specialists who work in this clinic are able to examine the inside of your bottom in the clinic to find out if you have conditions such as piles (haemorrhoids), polyps, cancers or inflammation of the bowel.

Which patients are referred to the colorectal clinic?

General practitioners refer patients to the colorectal clinic if they have problems such as bleeding from the bowel or diarrhoea or pain in the bottom that don't settle down quickly.

They may also refer patients with lumps or infection near the anus. Where a general practitioner is concerned that a patient may have a bowel cancer they can refer the patient to be seen in the colorectal clinic within two weeks by making a "two week wait" referral.

Preparing to visit the colorectal clinic

Most patients who visit the colorectal clinic will need to have the outside and the inside of their bottom examined in order for the specialist to diagnose the problem. If you tend to be constipated it is a good idea to take a laxative or a suppository (both available over the counter at a chemist) before you come to the clinic.

It also helps if you wear clothing that makes it easy to undress the lower part of your body. It is helpful if you can bring a list of the names of the tablets and medicines that you are taking.

If you feel strongly that you would prefer your examination to be done by a man or a woman, please tell your doctor at the time he refers you, and we can usually arrange this. Feel free to bring an adult relative or a friend with you to the clinic.

Please bring your diary with you in case you need to arrange any further appointments after you see the specialist.

What happens in the clinic?

The doctor or specialist nurse will see you in a room that ensures privacy. If you do not want a student present when you are seen, please tell the clerk when you arrive at the clinic. The doctor will ask you questions about your symptoms and will then ask to examine you.

The doctor will leave the room while you remove the clothing on the lower part of your body and put on a hospital gown. You are welcome to bring someone into the room with you to act as a chaperone during your examination. Or the doctor can bring a nurse or care assistant in as a chaperone if you wish.

The doctor may wish to examine your stomach; if so, you will need to lie flat on your back with a sheet over you while he or she feels your stomach. The doctor will then ask you to turn onto your left side and curl up into a ball so that he or she can examine your bottom.