



Colorectal Diagnostic Assessment Program

Patient Information for:

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R.S. McLaughlin
Durham Regional
Cancer Centre



Central East
Regional Cancer Program
in partnership with Cancer Care Ontario

A list of your tests and appointments

Diagnostic tests

Test:	
Date:	Time:
Location:	
What you will need to do to be ready for this test:	

Test:	
Date:	Time:
Location:	
What you will need to do to be ready for this test:	

Test:	
Date:	Time:
Location:	
What you will need to do to be ready for this test:	

Test:	
Date:	Time:
Location:	
What you will need to do to be ready for this test:	

Specialist appointments

Doctor:	
Specialty:	
Date:	Time:
Location:	
Notes:	

Doctor:	
Specialty:	
Date:	Time:
Location:	
Notes:	

Doctor:	
Specialty:	
Date:	Time:
Location:	
Notes:	



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Your doctor has questions about your colorectal health and has referred you to the Colorectal Diagnostic Assessment Program (DAP). The Nurse Navigator from the Colorectal DAP will be calling you to give you more information about this.

This booklet will give you more information about:

- The Colorectal DAP.
- The anatomy of your abdomen, pelvis and chest (anatomy refers to the study of the human body).
- Tests that may be used to look at your colorectal health.
- How to get ready for your tests and appointments.

What is the Colorectal Diagnostic Assessment Program (DAP?)

The Colorectal DAP is at the R.S. McLaughlin Durham Regional Cancer Centre. Your healthcare team from the Colorectal DAP may include nurses, a nurse navigator, a surgeon, specialists, a social worker, and a dietician. You may have other members on your healthcare team. You will have tests booked for you that will help your healthcare team find answers to questions about your colorectal health. The Nurse Navigator will be your contact for the Colorectal DAP.

What does the Nurse Navigator do?

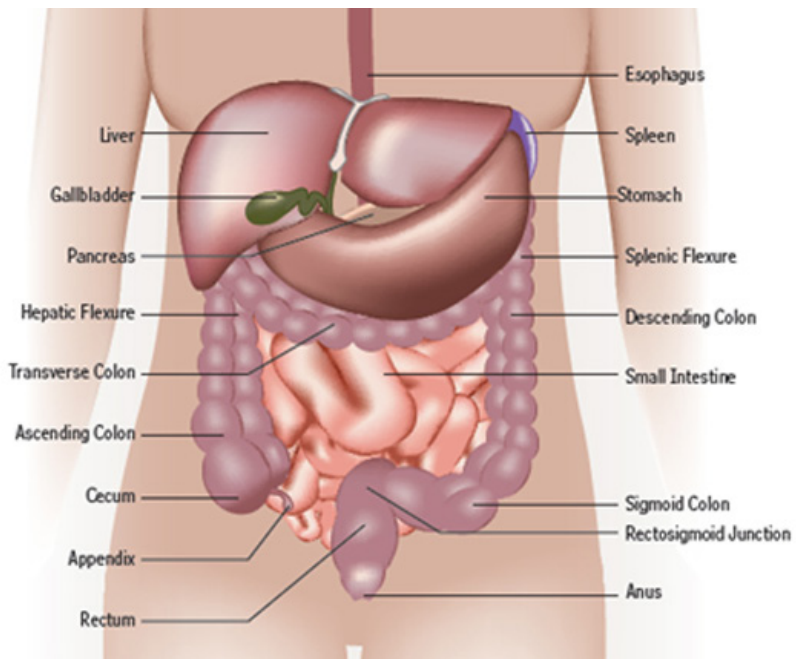
The Nurse Navigator will:

- Work with your healthcare team to make sure that your tests are booked as soon as possible.
- Talk to you about what the next step in your care will be.
- Give you information to help you be ready for your tests and appointments.
- Answer any questions you may have.

You can call the Nurse Navigator at:

905-576-8711 or 1-866-338-1778 ext. 2340
from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday





Your gastrointestinal system

The term colorectal refers to both your colon and rectum. The colon and the rectum form part of your digestive system, also called the gastrointestinal (gas-trō-in-'tes-ti-nal) or GI system.

Your GI system is a long tube that starts at your mouth and ends at your anus. After you swallow your food, it moves along this tube. The food breaks down as it travels through this tube. The nutrients you need are absorbed into your blood. What isn't used by your body continues through your digestive system as waste. This waste moves through your large intestine and out of your body as a solid matter called stool.

A gastroenterologist (gas'trō-en'terol'ojist) is a doctor who specializes in the throat, stomach and intestines.

Finding answers to your colorectal problems:

The tests you may have

Your gastroenterologist or colorectal surgeon will order the tests that are needed for you. You may not need to have all of the tests listed below. Your doctors (this includes your family doctor) will get your test results. The Nurse Navigator will help to answer your questions or concerns about your results.

Laboratory (Blood) tests

You may need to have blood tests that will tell your doctor how your organs and digestive system are working. A common blood test is CEA (Carcinoembryonic antigen). The CEA test can confirm a diagnosis of cancer. It can also help to tell the doctor how well your cancer treatment is working.

Digital rectal exam (DRE)

This exam is done by a doctor who places a lubricated, gloved finger into your anus to feel for growths or tumours. This exam is safe. It may be uncomfortable for you but it is not painful.

Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is a procedure that does not require you to stay in hospital. A doctor will give you medicine to make you sleep. After you are asleep; a thin, bendable tube with a tiny video camera at its tip, called a colonoscope, is placed through the anus into your rectum and into the colon. The colonoscopy can take small pieces of tissue for a biopsy and remove very small tumours, called polyps.

Polypectomy

A polyp is a small growth in the bowel. Polyps are usually benign (non-cancerous), but can turn malignant (cancerous). A polypectomy is when the polyp is taken out during a colonoscopy.

CT Scan (Computerized Axial Tomography)

A CT scan is a test that uses x-rays to take more detailed pictures of your organs and bones. A CT scan takes clearer pictures of organs, bone, soft tissue, blood vessels and other areas of the body than a normal x-ray. It is used to see normal and abnormal structures in your body. Your doctor or surgeon will order a CT Scan of your abdomen, pelvis and chest. When you get your appointment for a CT Scan, you will be told what you need to do to be ready for it. You will need to come to the hospital 30 minutes before your CT Scan appointment. You will need to bring a list of all the medications you are taking with you to this appointment.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

MRI uses a powerful magnetic field, radio frequency pulses and a computer to take detailed pictures of your organs, soft tissues, bones and other body structures. The MRI lets your doctor see normal and abnormal structures in your body. During the scan, you will be placed on an examination table that moves. Straps may be used to keep you in the right position for the scan.

Waiting for tests, appointments and results

It can be hard to wait for appointments and test results. It is normal to feel worried or upset. Many people feel this way.

What you can do while you wait:

- Make sure we have the right information to contact you.
- At the time of your test, ask when and how you will be told about your test results.
- Keep your normal routine. This can help to keep you from thinking about the time you have to wait.



- Do things that can help your body have the energy it needs to cope with stress. This includes: eating a healthy diet, getting a good night's sleep and reducing the amount of caffeine or alcohol you drink.
- Go for a walk. This may help you relax.
- Relax your mind by doing relaxation exercises or meditation.
- Talk about what is happening and how you are feeling with a family member or good friend. If you want to talk to someone about your feelings, your Nurse Navigator can help connect you with a social worker.
- Make an appointment to talk to your family doctor about what is happening.
- Some people find comfort in their faith and prayer. It may help to talk to your spiritual leader.
- Have someone go with you to appointments. It's hard to remember all the information you may be given.
- Write down the questions you have and take this with you when you go to see your surgeon or specialist. There is space provided at the end of this booklet to write your questions down.

Talk to your doctor and other members of your healthcare team if you have any questions or concerns.

Patient and Family Support Team

You and your family member or partner-in-care will have questions and concerns. It may be helpful for you to talk to a social worker or a dietitian from the Patient and Family Support Team.

A dietitian

A dietitian specializes in nutrition counselling and education.

Questions you may have for a dietitian:

- I am not hungry and I am losing weight. How can I improve my appetite?
- Is there any food that I can eat that will help increase my energy?
- I have heard about nutrition supplements. Should I be drinking them?
- I am having a hard time drinking water. What other fluids can I drink?

A dietitian is available to meet with you and your family to answer your questions and to give you support.

A social worker

A social worker can give you the support and information you may need to help answer your questions.

Social workers are trained in counselling techniques to help you solve problems, make decisions and improve your feelings of

wellbeing. We can do one to one counselling with you or your family member/partner-in-care. We can also meet with you and your family members together. If you are having a hard time with your emotions, you are not alone. These emotions can be temporary with the right support and treatment. Caring for your emotional health is just as important as taking care of your physical health.

There are many practical ways that a social worker can help you. We can give you information about the community organizations that can help you with transportation or how to get help in your home. We can also help you with your Power of Attorney forms or help you to get legal advice.

Questions you may have for the social worker:

- I am concerned about money. What financial support is available?
- My family member/partner-in-care can't bring me to my appointments. How will I get to the Cancer Centre?
- I have been feeling sad/scared/angry/stressed and it's affecting my relationships. How do I deal with it?
- I keep thinking "why is this happening to me?" Or "how do I make sense of it all?"
- I am feeling tired and can't do the same things around the house that I used to do. What community supports are there for me?
- I worry about the future. Is there anything my family member/partner-in-care and I can do to be ready?

- I worry about going back to work. What can I do to be ready to go back to work?

To make an appointment with a social worker or dietitian call: 905-576-8711 or 1-866-338-1778 at extension 3282.

Community support

Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre

Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre is a centre for cancer patients and their family members/partners-in-care. The Centre offers support, information and wellness programs to men and women. There are also programs for children and caregivers. Hearth Place is located at 86 Colborne St. West in Oshawa. Parking is free.

Phone: 905-579-4833

Email: hearthplace@hearthplace.org

Website: www.hearthplace.org



Please talk to a member of your healthcare team if you have questions or if you do not understand any of the information in this handout.

Do you know about the Patient Portal?

The Patient Portal is a secure website that allows you to:

- See and keep track of your future appointments.
- Print a calendar of your appointments.
- See a calendar of patient education classes.
- See updates and news items.

You can access the Patient Portal online at:

<https://yourportal.lakeridgehealth.on.ca>

