

Follow up on Your Colorectal Health

Your doctor has questions about your colorectal health and has referred you to a specialist. You may be referred to a gastroenterologist or colorectal surgeon. A gastroenterologist is a doctor who focuses on diseases of the digestive system. This handout offers information on what to expect for the next steps in your care.

Diagnostic tests and procedures

Below is a list of tests and procedures the doctor may want you to have. You may not need all of the tests or procedures listed. This is decided by your doctor. The results of these tests and procedures are needed to decide if you have cancer. It can be hard to wait for appointments and test results. It is normal to feel worried or upset, many people feel that way.

- Blood tests
Blood tests provide information to your doctor on how your organs and digestive system are working. A common blood test is a CEA (Carcinoembryonic antigen). The CEA test helps the doctor confirm a cancer diagnosis. If you require treatment for cancer, this test is used to see how well your treatment is working.
- Colonoscopy
A colonoscopy is performed using a colonoscope; a thin, bendable tube with a tiny video camera at the tip. The doctor will place this through your anus and rectum and up into your colon. It allows the doctor to see inside your colon and take small pieces of tissue or remove small growths known as polyps. These small pieces of tissue will be sent to the pathology lab for examination (biopsy).
- CT Scan (Computerized Axial Tomography)
A CT scan is a test using x-rays and computer technology to take 2 or 3 dimensional pictures of your organs and bones. It is used to see normal and abnormal structures in your body.
- MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)
MRI uses a powerful magnetic field and computer generated radio waves to create a very detailed image of your organs, soft tissues & bones. It is used to see normal and abnormal structures in your body.

You can find more information on the:

1. Lakeridge Health website at www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca and search 'colorectal'.
2. Colorectal Cancer Canada website at www.colorectalcancercanada.com