

General Surgery

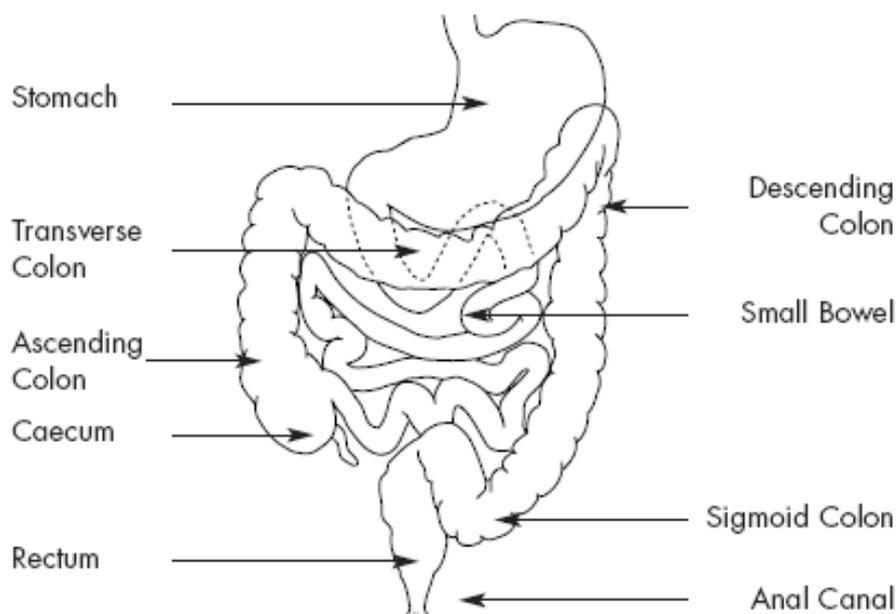
Left Hemicolectomy

Introduction

This operation involves having a general anaesthetic and usually takes approximately two hours. It is carried out for cancers or polyps in the left transverse colon or the descending colon. The left side of the transverse colon, the descending colon and part of the sigmoid colon may be removed. The transverse colon is attached to the sigmoid colon with stitches or staples.

You will need to be in hospital for up to 7 days but the length of your stay is dependent upon you achieving pre-set goals as you recover. These will be explained to you beforehand.

Your bowel may need to be cleaned before the operation. The ward nurses will give you the medication required to clean the bowel the day before your operation.



Patient Information

After the operation

When you wake up after the operation you will have a number of tubes attached to you, all of which will be temporary.

- A drip will be put in your arm; this allows fluid to be given to you continuously. Sometimes a drip is placed into a vein in your neck. This makes it easier to give you fluids and drugs after your operation.
- A tube will be in your arm called a venflon; this is used to slowly release medication to ease the pain.
- A flexible tube called a catheter will be placed into your bladder. This will drain your urine away into a bag.
- A drainage tube may be in your abdomen – occasionally the surgeon performing your operation may feel it is necessary to insert a drain near to the wound, this enables wounds to heal quickly and cleanly.

As you recover the ward nurses will remove these tubes within a few days of the operation.

Complications of Surgery

For all patients undergoing bowel surgery there is a chance that the internal wound that joins your bowel together will not heal satisfactorily. If this happens a leak from your bowel of its contents could occur. Sometimes this will heal by itself without further treatment. If it does not heal by itself a second operation may be needed to correct the leak.

After any major operation there is a risk of chest infection, wound infection and thrombosis. Whilst you are in hospital the ward staff will take steps to prevent these happening to you.

Chest Infection

You can help by practising deep breathing exercises and following the instructions of the physiotherapist.

Wound Infection

The risk of this is increased with bowel surgery. Antibiotics will be given to you through the drip to help prevent this. You can help by eating a diet rich in protein and vitamins as soon as you are able to.

Thrombosis

This is due to changes in the circulation during and after surgery. A small dose of a blood thinning drug will be injected daily until you are walking around. You can help by moving around as much as you are able and by exercising your legs whilst in the chair or in bed. You will also be given some support stockings to wear for the duration of your stay in hospital.

Diet and Nutrition

Most people who have had bowel surgery are concerned about what they will be allowed or able to eat after the operation.

Your surgeon will tell you when it is all right to start eating again. In most cases it will be quite soon after your operation. When you are able to eat, you can eat whatever you feel like and you are encouraged to return to a normal diet.

Patient Information

It is important to try and put the weight back on that you may have lost during your illness. In order for healing on both the inside and outside of your body to take place, the nutrients and vitamins from your food are required.

Whilst you are in hospital the ward staff can arrange for you to see a Dietitian. Please ask if you think this would be useful.

Please ask your Colorectal Specialist Nurse about diet if you are concerned. Additional written information is available.

Bowel Function

The first few days after your operation you probably won't go to the toilet. Your bowel needs time to adjust after it has been handled during the operation. When your bowel is ready you will notice that you begin to pass wind. Usually, once this happens you will feel the need to go to the toilet. It is expected that for about two weeks your motion (faeces) will be soft and even watery and you will need to go to the toilet two or three times a day. This will improve in the following month. As your motion (faeces) thickens you will not need to go to the toilet as many times a day.

Your Colorectal Specialist Nurse will answer any questions you may have about your bowel function. You can ring the Colorectal Specialist Nurse at any time once you are home and she will advise you about what is the best way to manage your bowel function.

Further information

If you have more questions or require any further information, please use the contact details below.

Colorectal Specialist Nurses

Claire Jackson, Debbie Smith	024 76 965753
Abby Barnwell, Sarah Taylor	024 7696 5617
Helen Taylor	024 7696 5616
Katrina Turner	024 7696 5825

Local Services

Age UK Coventry		024 7623 1999
Age UK Warwickshire		01926 458100
Bowel Screening Unit		01788 545166/667737
Cancer Information Centre	Main Entrance, UHCW	024 7696 6052
Coventry Macmillan Care Team	Hospital/Community	024 7696 5498 024 7623 7001
Rugby Macmillan Care Team.	Community	01788 555119
GUT (Cancer Support Group for Coventry & Warwickshire)		024 7696 6475
Hospital Chaplaincy	Hospital	024 7696 7515
Bowel Clinical Trials Nurse	Hospital	024 7696 7151

Patient Information

Specialist Genetic Nurse	Hospital	024 7696 4000
Surgical Counselling Service	Hospital	024 7696 6188
Oncology Counselling Service	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Complimentary Therapies	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Psychosexual Therapy	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Citizens Advice Bureau	Coventry	024 7625 2050 (appointment only)
	Rugby	0844 855 2322
Coventry Carers Centre	Support for carers	024 7663 2972
Guideposts Trust	Support for carers	024 7638 5888

Also available at University Hospital

Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Dietitian Service, Social Services

National Contact Numbers

Association of Coloproctology for Great Britain and Ireland	http://www.acpgbi.org.uk/
Beating Bowel Cancer	020 8973 0011 (Helpline) www.beatingbowelcancer.org
Benefit Enquiry Line	Freephone 0800 882200
National Cancer Institute (American)	www.cancer.gov
Bowel Cancer UK	020 7381 9711
Colostomy Association	0800 328 4257 www.colostomyassociation.org.uk/
CORE (The Digestive Disorders Foundation)	020 7486 0341 www.corecharity.org.uk
The Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Support Group (IA)	0800 018 4724 www.the-ia.org.uk
Macmillan Cancer Support	0808 808 0000 www.macmillan.org.uk
Marie Curie Cancer Care	0800 716 146 www.mariecurie.org.uk

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