

## Community Endoscopy Service

### Risks associated with taking Bowel Preparation

#### What is bowel preparation ?

Bowel preparation (usually Moviprep or Citramag and Senna) is a laxative that you take orally. It is designed to empty all or part of your large bowel in preparation for an investigative procedure – usually a colonoscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy. It works by causing your bowels to open and expel its contents within a short space of time.

This medication is given to you after your GP has referred you to our services and as such should not be given to anyone other than the intended recipient.

#### The purpose and intended benefit of taking the bowel preparation is:

To aid diagnosis during a colonoscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy by allowing the endoscopist to clearly look at the lining of your bowel/colon.

#### Possible side effects of the bowel preparation:

The nature of the laxative means that when taken, you will experience abdominal cramping and discomfort. This will be accompanied by a sense of urgency – this is a normal reaction to taking bowel preparation.

- Common side effects can be vomiting – nausea – abdominal pain – anal discomfort – abdominal discomfort – flatulence – sleep disturbance – headache.
- Dermatological side effects can be urticaria (nettle rash) – angioedema – pruritus (itchiness) – rash – erythema (reddening)
- Less frequent side effects can be hypokalaemia – hyponatraemia – convulsions – rigor.
- Rare side effects can be palpitations – arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat) – dyspnoea (trouble breathing) – transient hypotension.
- Severe side effects include anaphylactic reactions – this is a life-threatening condition and symptoms can include angioedema – anaphylactic shock – circulatory and cardiac arrest – hypotension – larynx oedema (swelling of airways) – bronchospasm. However, anaphylaxis may begin with less worrying symptoms such as coughing – rhinitis – sneezing – conjunctivitis – urticaria and rash.
- Some people may have a higher risk for serious complications with bowel preparations. This includes people who have medical conditions such as severe inflammatory bowel disease or extreme swelling of the intestines. Also, people who have an electrolyte imbalance may have an increased risk for potential seizures while using bowel preparations.
- Bowel preparations may cause negative interactions if you are taking certain medications and advice must be sought for use in women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

#### Alternative treatment:

In the event that a certain type of bowel preparation is deemed as not suitable for you, an alternative may be available. Please let your referrer/our bookings team know as soon as possible if you suspect that you have issues with bowel preparation.