



WRHA Central Intake Office for Endoscopy Procedures Frequently Asked Questions for patients and their families

1. What is the Central Intake Office/Model and how will I benefit from it?

Based on the single-entry model approach, a central intake model for endoscopy was established in the WRHA in 2016. This was started with the following goals and has resulted in:

- To improve patient access to timely endoscopy with a ~55% reduction in wait times
- To ensure patients are getting the right test, for the right indication, with an appropriate Specialist Physician
- To improve communication, record keeping and continuity with patients and referring physician
- Decrease ambiguity about patient care responsibilities between the different offices and sites providing endoscopy services.

2. What types of procedures are booked through the Endoscopy Central Intake Office?

Currently our office books the following endoscopic procedures:

- Gastroscopy
- Colonoscopy
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy
- Endoscopic Ultrasound

3. I was told by my physician that my procedure would be done by a surgeon or an endoscopist. What is the difference between these two specialists?

Endoscopist is a broad term for any physician performing endoscopy. However, for the purposes of Central Intake, the term is confined to gastroenterologists, and other internal medicine specialists trained formally in endoscopy and gastroenterology. A surgeon endoscopist may be a general surgeon or sub-specialized surgeon with training and practice in gastrointestinal endoscopy. Central Intake will make every effort to prioritize cases more likely to need surgery to surgeons, and those more likely to have a chronic medical condition to endoscopists.

4. Can I decide which endoscopist or surgeon to see?

Yes, you may request a specific specialist. However, if the wait time for that particular specialist is longer than clinical guidelines recommend for your symptoms, you will be given the choice to see a different but, equally qualified endoscopist/surgeon at an earlier date. Our goal is to provide a timely service for all patients within the health region.

5. Can I choose the hospital I would like my procedure done at?

Not always. Each endoscopist/ surgeon has practicing privileges at specific facilities. You would be scheduled at the particular site where the specialist assigned to do your procedure has the next available opening.

6. Will my general practitioner receive the results from my procedure?

Yes, all test results will be forwarded to the general practitioner by the physician who performed your procedure.

7. Can I request a specific site?

Yes, but it is not guaranteed that the procedure will be done at the requested site. Patient suitability for specific low risk sites and the urgency of the referral will not always allow us to match the location requested.

8. How will I be notified that my procedure has been booked?

In the event that your procedure is of an urgent concern, one of the nurses from the Central Intake office will contact you to discuss and book your referral. Our goal is to do this within 7 days of receiving referral. For a semi urgent referral, our goal is to contact you by phone or by appointment letter via mail within 20 days of receiving the referral. For an elective referral, our goal is to mail out an appointment letter within 30 days of receiving the referral.

When your procedure has been booked, your appointment information, along with an instruction sheet about your procedure and any additional information that you may need to prepare yourself for the procedure – will be mailed to your home address. We will also send a copy of your appointment information to your general practitioner.

9. What happens if I need to cancel a scheduled procedure?

If you are unable to keep the appointment we have scheduled for you, we ask that you contact our office immediately at the phone number we provided on your appointment notification. When you call our office, we will reschedule your procedure to a suitable date. This will also allow us the opportunity to book another patient into the appointment date you are unable to keep. A new referral may be required from your primary care physician if you reschedule your procedure more than twice.

10. Will I get a reminder call?

Yes. You will receive an automated message five working days prior to the date of your scheduled procedure provided we have a current working phone number on file from your referring provider.

11. What happens if I don't show for my procedure?

The endoscopist or surgeon that was scheduled to do your procedure will send a letter to the physician who referred you for the test indicating that you did not attend your procedure. It's up to the specialist that you were booked with to decide if your procedure will be rescheduled without a new referral.

By not showing up for your procedure appointment, you are choosing to waste a valuable resource that could have been used by yourself or someone else.

12. Can I choose to not have my referral go to Central Intake?

There are physicians who perform endoscopy services outside of WRHA hospitals. They practice privately (e.g. Winnipeg clinic, Manitoba clinic) and you have the choice to ask your general practitioner to engage one of those services.