

Specialty: Gastroenterology



CURRENT WAITING TIMES

Bay of Plenty District Health Board:

- The Gastroenterology service at Tauranga Hospital is combined between medical and surgical services with referrals being pooled between the two services. A surgical Gastroenterology service is offered at Whakatane Hospital.
- A threshold for referral and procedure acceptance has been set to assist with MOH waiting time compliance. Referrals graded priority 2B or 3 will be returned to GP care at point of referral.
- Due to resource constraints, from March 2011, all patients requiring 5 year surveillance scopes will be returned to their GPs for review. Having spent time researching indications and pick up rates for cancerous lesions within the colon, recommendations from the gastroenterology specialists:
 - The evidence suggests that for patients on a 5 year surveillance schedule, findings are in the order of 1 cancer in 300 scopes, whereas in symptomatic patients, cancers are found in more than 1 in 100. In addition to this the symptomatic group have other pathologies discovered which can make a significant difference to their management.
 - Patients on shorter interval surveillance will currently continue on that schedule.
 - For the patients we are unable to survey, alternative arrangements such as biannual FOB testing and radiology can be considered, although the latter could become resource limited also. Patients who develop symptoms such as change in bowel habit, bleeding, iron deficiency anaemia (as demonstrated by a low ferritin) should be re-referred for colonoscopy.
 - Patients will continue to receive recommendations for 5 yr surveillance, based on best practice guidelines, even though we can not currently provide this service. Patients may choose to seek a colonoscopy in the private sector.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

FIRST SPECIALIST ASSESSMENTS	Wait Times
Waiting priority 1	Up to 3 months
Waiting priority 2A	Up to 6 months
Waiting priority 2B	Not accepted
Waiting priority 3	Not accepted
TREATMENT LIST	
Waiting priority 1	Up to 2 weeks
Waiting priority 2A	Up to 6 months
Waiting priority 2B	Not accepted
Waiting priority 3	Not accepted