

Sunday Mail (SA)
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Probing questions - and then trundled to theatre
Oh, the cheek of it all
By Peter Goers

LAST week I had a colonoscopy. It didn't tickle my tonsils (fortunately) and I have to inform members of the former Howard government that they didn't find the weapons of mass destruction.

It was probably the last place they've looked. I'm a martyr to diverticulitis - a debilitating infection of the bowel - and it was time for my specialist to go where no man has gone before. Well, not exactly. I did endure a colonoscopy nearly 25 years ago with the old technology; the cameras were bigger - in fact, I think there was even a tripod (well, it felt like that) and it was all probably in CinemaScope - think of a David Lean epic.

In those days you lay there watching your own bowel on the TV, which was marginally better than some shows on TV but the ratings were terrible. It's mercifully easier these days because they knock you out.

My surgical procedures have been few and far between - obligatory tonsillectomy in the 1960s - a baby boomer rite of passage (you had a sore throat twice and they whipped out your tonsils), an appendectomy and a sinus operation 20 years ago at the lovely Calvary Hospital when you could still smoke there.

I have such fond memories of merrily smoking with my nose bandaged and blocked, and nuns from the Little Company of Jesus who kindly emptied the ashtray.

Nowadays, the still-beautiful Calvary Hospital is lamentably non-smoking, but again I surrendered my body to the good sisters who are, regrettably, fewer in number if not faith.

Being a public patient I was repulsed by the public system with its 12-month waiting list for a colonoscopy and had to pay through the nose to be in the private system to be investigated through my own private system. You have to pay in advance in case you don't survive.

The forms for admission are challenging. No smoking for 24 hours prior to the procedure (ha!), remove any piercings and don't wear make-up. False nails are permitted but discouraged. I was advised not to bring children - damn, I really wanted to bring children to my colonoscopy.

Admitting to my actual date of birth is difficult because I lie so often I've forgotten it. Oh - 28/7/60. Occupation - Reformed social irritant.

The question about Indigenous Group worries me. Was I non-indigenous, Aboriginal and TSI, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. I refused to be non. I am, you are, we are Australians.

Actually, I find this offensive and it's a government requirement, so I left it blank so some Commonwealth statistician will wonder what I am, which I wonder myself, but I'm not non.

Next of kin always depends on my mood. Could I be pregnant? I hope not. Am I currently receiving community nurse visits? Alas, no. Persistent cough? Yes. Do I suffer from progressive dementia? What was the question?

THE day before you cannot avoid voiding.

You fast, which always seems so slow, and you have to drink a substance called Picoprep, designed by the Spanish Inquisition, and my kingdom for an ensuite. I was watching Showdown and had the Crows won it would've given me more of the s***s.

I arrived at Calvary at the crack of dawn (literally) and I was measured by a lovely nurse.

Then I'm trundled into the operating theatre to greet my kindly gastroenterologist Dr Ilmars Lidums and the anaesthetist, Dr Dhillon, and the last I remembered was asking them whether they were Crows fans.

Then intravenous sedation and bye-byes. I felt no probing of my sigmoid colon (not Sigmoid

Freud) but I did dream of a rat up a drainpipe.

Forty-five minutes later I was sitting in a comfy chair wolfing down a sandwich.

Then you're given into the care of a responsible adult you have designated, which was tricky because I know so few. But a friend pretended to be one and took me home via a bakery.

I was advised for the next 24 hours not to drive a car or a tractor (the front paddock will have to wait), not to sign any legal documents, not to travel alone on public transport (no worries there), use hazardous machinery (damn, I was planning to chainsaw the front garden), not to engage in sports, heavy work or lifting, and to move slowly.

Why break the habits of a lifetime? No problem with any of that.

Fortunately I had no polyps and since they cost \$100 I'll have a vowel thanks.

I do have diverticulitis. I can't wait for film of my bowel to turn up on YouTube or FunWall.

Peter Goers can be heard weeknights on 891 ABC.

Caption: IT'S ALL OVER NOW: Peter Goers at Calvary Hospital in North Adelaide

Illus: Dinkus: peter goers

Photo: peter goers outside calvary hospital

BIOG: GOERS PETER

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