

What is a Colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy is the observation of the lower digestive system - the large intestine. This procedure, a direct exam of the colon, can help diagnose early cancers, tumors, polyps, abscesses, and inflammation. Colonoscopy can usually assist with the diagnosis of reasons for pain, anemia or rectal bleeding. Polyps, which may lead to colon cancer, can be removed and tissue can be collected for further study. Colorectal cancer, which is the only true preventable cancer, may be prevented through the removal of polyps.

Your physician may order a colonoscopy if you are exhibiting any of the following warning signs of gastrointestinal disease:

- Difficulty swallowing
- Abdominal tenderness, pain or rigidity; epigastric pain
- Change in bowel habits, such as constipation, caliber of stools or chronic diarrhea
- Persistent vomiting or persistent diarrhea
- Rectal bleeding
- Weight loss
- Dehydration or fever
- Heartburn
- Iron-deficiency anemia

Contact Us



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Preparing for a Colonoscopy



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Preparation

Physical preparation is required prior to each colonoscopy.

- A clear liquid diet is required for 1 to 2 days before the procedure.
- Laxatives are required the day before the procedure.
- An enema will be necessary one hour prior to leaving for the hospital. If you do not follow your doctor's instructions carefully, your procedure may be canceled and rescheduled for a future date.

Before the Exam

- The colonoscopy examination procedure will be carefully explained and you will be asked to sign a consent form.
- Your medical history will be taken. Note any allergies you have and bring a list of your medications.
- Your blood pressure and other vital signs will be taken.

What To Expect

- You will be taken to the procedure room by wheelchair while your driver waits for you in a designated waiting area.
- You will be assisted to a cart by your nurse in preparation for the procedure.
- Monitors, such as blood pressure cuff, EKG electrodes, pulse oximetry and oxygen cannula will be placed on you.
- You will be asked to turn onto your left side prior to the procedure.
- A Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) will administer medication to help you relax and become drowsy. You will then be sedated.
- A narrow scope will be inserted through the anus and rectum then moved through the entire colon. Each part of the colon is carefully observed and meticulously examined.
- The exam usually takes between 20 minutes and 1 hour.

After The Procedure

You will rest until the sedative wears off and your vital signs are stable. Abdominal discomfort caused by the air used to expand your colon may be experienced. The possible cramping can be alleviated by passing gas. Any cramping will improve within the first 24 hours following the exam.

After determining your stability, the nurse will take you by wheelchair to a consultation with your physician. It is important to bring another adult to this consultation in case you have difficulty remembering due to the after effects of the sedation.

You will then return to the recovery area and monitored as you become more alert. Once you can tolerate fluids by mouth, you will be given solid foods. You will remain in the recovery area for approximately 45 to 60 minutes receiving assistance as necessary.

Discharge instructions will be explained and a copy of them will be sent with you. Complications are rare, but can occur. Please call your physician if you experience any of the following:

- Heavy bleeding
- Pain
- Fever
- Nausea or vomiting