



## Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy enables your doctor to examine the lining of your rectum, colon (large intestine) and the lowest part of the small intestine (known as the ileum) for any abnormalities. This is done by inserting a flexible tube, known as a colonoscope, into your anus. The colonoscope is then slowly advanced into the rectum, colon and ileum (the section of the small intestine that is closest to the colon.) The colonoscope is about the width of your finger. It has its own lens and light source and will project images from inside your body onto a video monitor. A colonoscopy is well tolerated by most patients and rarely causes much pain. You might feel pressure or abdominal bloating or cramping during the procedure.

### Prior to the procedure:

The day prior to the procedure, you will need to follow special instructions to cleanse your colon. This is often referred to as the colon “*prep.*” It is very important that you follow the instructions exactly. You will be asked to start a clear liquid diet and to take medicine that will cleanse your colon. The medicine may be a combination of pills, liquid medicine to drink, suppositories and/or enemas. The type of colon prep that is selected by your doctor is based on your preferences and medical conditions, as well as the doctor’s preference. The medicine will cleanse your colon so the doctor can visualize the lining. If the prep instructions are not followed completely, bowel cleansing may not be adequate for good visualization of the colon. In other words, the doctor may not be able to do the exam or the exam may need to be repeated. Some polyps could be overlooked if waste products in the colon obscure the view of the wall of the colon. The procedure can only be accurate and effective if the bowel preparation is effective.

Please call your doctor to let him know if you were unable to complete the entire preparation or if you have any side effects. An alternative method may be recommended instead. After taking the entire bowel prep, by the morning of your procedure, any movement from your bowels should be clear liquid without any solid particles.

You should not eat or drink anything after midnight the day before your procedure – or for at least 8 hours prior to the start of your procedure. Please discuss with your doctor whether he wants you to take any of your daily medicines on the morning of your procedure, for example, medicine for your blood pressure.

*What to expect during the procedure:*

A monitor will record your blood pressure, pulse, blood oxygen levels, as well as the heart rate and rhythm throughout the procedure. Your doctor will give you medicine through an IV to help you relax and be more comfortable during the procedure. You will lie on your side or back while your doctor slowly advances a colonoscope through your rectum and large intestine. Your doctor will examine the lining again as he or she slowly withdraws the colonoscope. If the doctor sees anything that may be abnormal, he can take a tissue sample (known as a biopsy) and send it to the lab for analysis. The doctor can also remove polyps (small growths on the lining of the intestine.) He may also decide to treat a problem area with cautery or injection therapy.

*What to expect after the procedure:*

The procedure itself usually takes 30 to 60 minutes, although you should plan on being at the hospital for two to three hours. This includes preparation and recovery time. The medicine you receive may make it difficult for you to remember what the doctor or nurses tell you after your procedure. It is helpful to have someone with you who can also hear the instructions and stay with you on the day of the procedure. You cannot operate machinery or drive a motorized vehicle for 24 hours after the procedure. Please make arrangements for someone to be at the hospital to take you home. Please see [\*endoscopy discharge instructions\*](#) in the patient resources section of this website