



What is colonoscopy? A colonoscopy allows a doctor to look inside the entire large intestine. The procedure enables the physician to see things such as inflamed tissue, abnormal growths, and ulcers. It is often used as a screening to look for early signs of cancer in the colon and rectum. It is also used to look for causes of unexplained changes in bowel habits and to evaluate symptoms like abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, and weight loss.

What is the colon? The colon, or large bowel, is the last portion of your digestive tract, or gastrointestinal tract. The colon is a hollow tube that starts at the end of the small intestine and ends at the rectum and anus. The colon is about 5 feet long, and its main function is to store unabsorbed food waste and absorb water and other body fluids before the waste is eliminated as stool.

Preparation Please follow the instructions on the prep that explain what you need to do to prepare for your colonoscopy. Your colon must be completely empty for the colonoscopy to be thorough and safe. Please inform your doctor of any medical conditions you have or medications you take on a regular basis such as aspirin, arthritis medications, blood thinners, diabetes medication, and vitamins that contain iron.

The medical staff will also want to know if you have allergies, heart disease, an implantable defibrillator, lung disease, or any medical condition that may need special attention. Expect your visit to last between two to three hours.

Be sure to leave earrings and other jewelry at home. You must also arrange for someone to take you home afterward, because you will not be allowed to drive after being sedated. Your procedure will be canceled if you do not have a ride home. Bring your insurance card and co-pay.

Procedure For the colonoscopy, you will lie on your left side on the examining table. You will be given anesthesia, or pain medication and a moderate sedative to keep you comfortable and help you relax during the exam. The doctor and a nurse will monitor your vital signs, look for any signs

of discomfort, and make adjustments as needed. The doctor will then insert a long, flexible, lighted tube into your rectum and slowly guide it into your colon. The tube is called a colonoscope. The scope transmits an image of the inside of the colon onto a video screen so the doctor can carefully examine the lining of the colon. The scope bends so the doctor can move it around the curves of your colon. You may be asked to change positions at times so the doctor can more easily move the scope to better see the different parts of your colon. The scope blows air into your colon and inflates it, which helps give the doctor a better view. Most patients do not remember the procedure afterwards.

The doctor can remove most abnormal growths in your colon, like a polyp, which is a growth in the lining of the bowel. Polyps are removed using tiny tools passed through the scope. Most polyps are not cancerous, but they could turn into cancer. Just looking at a polyp is not enough to tell if it is cancerous. The polyps are sent to a lab for testing. By identifying and removing polyps, a colonoscopy likely prevents most cancers from forming. The doctor can also remove tissue samples to test in the lab for diseases of the colon (biopsy). In addition, if any bleeding occurs in the colon, the doctor can pass an electrical probe, place special clips or use special medicines through the scope to stop the bleeding. The tissue removal and treatments to stop bleeding usually do not cause pain. In many cases, a colonoscopy allows for accurate diagnosis and treatment of colon abnormalities without the need for a major operation.

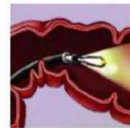
During the procedure you may feel mild cramping. You can reduce the cramping by taking several slow, deep breaths. When the doctor has finished, the colonoscope is slowly withdrawn while the lining of your bowel is carefully examined. Bleeding and puncture of the colon are possible but uncommon complications of a colonoscopy.

A colonoscopy usually takes up to 60 minutes. The sedative and pain medicine should keep you from feeling much discomfort during the exam. You may feel some cramping or the sensation of having gas after the procedure is completed, but it usually stops within an hour. Because you will be sedated, you will need to rest at the endoscopy facility for about an hour until the medication wears off.

Rarely, some people experience severe abdominal pain, fever, bloody bowel movements, dizziness, or weakness afterward. If

you have any of these side effects, contact your physician immediately. Read your discharge instructions carefully. Medications such as blood-thinners may need to be stopped for a short time after having your colonoscopy, especially if a biopsy was performed or polyps were removed. Full recovery by the next day is normal and expected.

COLONOSCOPY



The colon is examined with a flexible lighted tube called a colonoscope and a biopsy is collected if an abnormality is detected.

Your Appointment:

Date: ___/___/___ Time: _____

Facility: _____

Physician: _____