

# COLONOSCOPY

## Patient Education Towards Digestive Health

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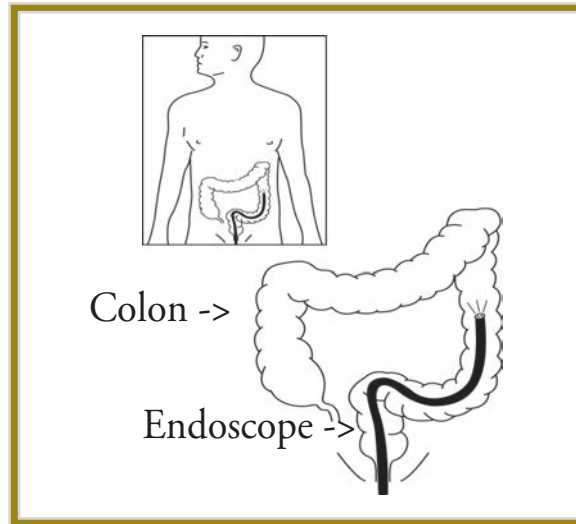
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## What Is A Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy lets your doctor see the lining of your large intestine (rectum and colon). Using a thin flexible tube (endoscope) your doctor can look inside your colon for problems such as swelling, tumors, or growths (polyps).



## How Do I Prepare For A Colonoscopy?

Your colon must be completely clean for a good test. The doctor will tell you how to clean your colon. Cleansing usually means following these steps:

- The day before your colonoscopy you can only have clear liquids (those you can see through, such as broth, white grape juice and apple juice). Do not eat or drink anything red or carbonated and no dairy products
- You will be instructed on your colon prep (special cleaning agents) at the time of scheduling.
- Do not eat or drink for 8 hours before your test. Your stomach must be empty.

- Tell your doctor if you.....
  - have any allergies, heart or lung problems.
  - are or think you may be pregnant.
  - have had an endoscopy in the past and if you had problems with the medicine or dye used.
  - take antibiotics before having dental work.
- If you take medicine to thin your blood, (i.e., heparin, coumadin or Plavix) or aspirin compounds, contact us. In general, you must stop taking these pills for several days, but in some cases you may continue to take them.
- If you are a diabetic, please ask your doctor if you should take your insulin and/or pills before your test.
- You may take blood pressure and heart medicine as usual the morning of the test.
- If you take pills in the morning, drink only a small sip of water to help you swallow.
- Do not take any antacids.
- Bring with you a list of all prescription and over-the-counter medicines you are taking.
- Bring with you all medical records and x-ray films that relate to your current problem.
- Make sure an adult can take you home. The medicines used during the procedure will not wear off for several hours. You will NOT be able to drive. If you travel by public transportation, such as by bus, van or taxi, you will still need an adult to ride home with you.

**If you come alone, your test will have to be rescheduled.**

## What Will Happen During A Colonoscopy?

1. When you come for the colonoscopy, the doctor will talk to you about the test and answer any questions. You should know why you are having a colonoscopy and understand the treatment option and possible risks.
2. You will wear a hospital gown and be asked to remove eye glasses, contact lenses or dentures. An IV will be started and blood may be drawn for lab studies. You may receive antibiotics through the IV.
2. You will be asked to sign a consent form which gives the doctor permission to do the test.
4. You will be taken by stretcher to the procedure room. A blood pressure cuff will be put on your arm or leg. A small clip will be put on your finger. These will let the nurse check your blood pressure and heart rate during the test.
5. You will be asked to lie on your left side and the doctor will give you medicine through your IV to make you relaxed and sleepy.
6. When you are sleepy, the doctor will do a rectal exam to check for any problems.
7. Next, the doctor will insert a thin, flexible tube (endoscope) into your rectum and gently move the endoscope through your colon. As the doctor moves the endoscope, air will be added to your colon. The air opens your colon and makes it easier for the doctor to pass the endoscope safely. You may experience a feeling of pressure or cramping as the air is added.
8. Once the endoscope reaches the end of the colon, the endoscope is withdrawn slowly, looking at the lining of the colon for any problems. The test may last 20 to 60 minutes.

## What Treatments Can Be Done During A Colonoscopy?

- **Biopsy:** If your doctor thinks an area of the lining needs to be looked at more closely he will take a small piece (biopsy). This piece is sent to the lab to be examined.
- **Cauterization:** If the doctor finds an area of bleeding, it can be controlled by applying medicines through the endoscope directly onto the area of bleeding. The doctor can also insert a small, heated wire through the endoscope and seal off the blood vessels with a heat treatment (cauterization). You will not feel this treatment.
- **Polyp Removal:** If the doctor finds polyps on the lining of the colon, they may be removed. Polyps vary in size from a tiny dot to several inches. Most polyps are non-cancerous but the doctor cannot tell a non-cancerous polyp by its looks. For this reason, if the doctor removes a polyp, it is sent to the lab for further tests. Removal of polyps is an important way of preventing colon cancer.

## After A Colonoscopy...

1. You will be taken to the recovery area. Your blood pressure and heart rate are watched until you wake up in about 30 to 90 minutes.
2. After removing your IV, the nurse will give you written discharge instructions to follow when you go home. The doctor will talk to you before you leave.
3. You may have some cramping or bloating because of the air placed in your large intestine. This should go away with the passage of gas. You should be able to eat after the test, but your doctor may restrict your diet and activities for the rest of the day.
4. Even if you feel awake, your judgement and reflexes will be slow. You will not be able to leave unless an adult takes you home. Again, you will NOT be able to drive.

## Over The Next 24 Hours...

- You will need to rest quietly until the next day.
- After the test, you may feel bloated and pass gas. This is normal and will go away in a few hours.
- You may resume your regular diet and medications after the procedure.
- Do not drive, operate machinery, sign legal documents or make important decisions.
- Do not drink alcohol or take sleeping/nerve pills.

## What Are The Risks?

- A tender lump may form where the IV was placed. The lump may not go away for several weeks. You will need to call your doctor if redness, pain or swelling in this hand or arm lasts for more than two days.
- When polyps are removed, bleeding can occur but is usually minor and easily controlled. In rare cases, blood transfusions or emergency surgery may be needed.
- Perforation. Tearing or making a hole in the colon wall is very rare, but may require surgery.

## Call The Doctor If You...

- ◆ have severe pain
- ◆ vomit
- ◆ pass or vomit blood
- ◆ have chills and fever above 101 degrees

If you have any problems, call your specialist. If it is after regular business hours, page the "GI Doctor on Call" through the MUSC paging operator at (843) 792-2123.