

# The Colonoscopy Procedure

On the day of your colonoscopy arrive at the hospital or your doctor's office wearing comfortable clothing. Have someone come with you to drive you home.

Before the procedure you may have to take off any jewelry and you will put on a hospital gown. Your doctor will ask you to sign an informed consent form before the procedure, explaining that you understand the procedure and any risks involved.

You may be given fluids through an IV needle in your arm. Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked and monitored throughout the procedure. You may be given extra oxygen throughout the examination.

Medication is given to you through the IV needle in your arm. The medication will make you sleepy and relaxed. As you become sleepy you will be asked to move to your left side. A rectal examination is performed to look for problems with the anus or rectum.

Your doctor will use a thin tube called a 'colonoscope' to see inside your colon. The colonoscope is lubricated and the tip of the scope is gently inserted into the rectum. Air is pumped in to inflate the colon. This keeps the colon open giving your doctor a clear view while the tube is carefully guided through the bowel.

The colonoscope has a tiny camera and light on one end that sends pictures back to a video screen to show the lining of the colon in detail. Your doctor will look at the lining of your colon thoroughly as the scope travels to the beginning of your large intestine. The beginning of the large intestine is called the cecum. After the cecum is reached and examined the scope is slowly removed and the bowel is carefully inspected.

This is a video taken during a colonoscopy. As you can see, your doctor will have a clear view of the inside lining of your colon.

If your doctor sees any abnormalities in your colon he can thread tools down through the scope to take tissue samples or even remove polyps so they never have a chance to develop into cancer. If a polyp is found, your doctor may perform a painless procedure called a polypectomy. He can remove it completely with metal forceps or a thin, wire snare.

The snare is placed around the base of the polyp and tightened until the polyp is cut off. If bleeding occurs he has tools available, including clips, to stop the bleeding. Or a mild electrical current is used to stop any bleeding.

Polypectomies are often performed during colonoscopies. Any tissue that is removed is then sent to a lab where the tissue sample is examined using a microscope.

# The Colonoscopy Procedure

A colonoscopy is safe, but every medical procedure does involve some risk. Some of the risks include perforation or tearing of the colon lining, bleeding from removal of a polyp, infection, missed polyps, or you may have a reaction to the sedative medication. Make sure you tell your doctor about any allergies you have, especially ones to medication. Most patients and doctors feel the benefits of a colonoscopy far outweigh the risks.

Your colonoscopy should take between 15 and 45 minutes to complete. Once the procedure is finished, you'll move to recovery where you'll wake up. Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked and you'll receive further instructions from your healthcare team.