

Colorectal Screening Procedures

Some colorectal screening tests look directly at the lining of your colon and rectum for polyps or cancer.

These tests include: Flexible Sigmoidoscopy, Colonoscopy, and CT Colonography.

During a Flexible Sigmoidoscopy, your healthcare provider looks at the inner lining of the rectum and the last two feet of the colon.

They will use a thin, flexible tube with a light on the end. The test may be uncomfortable. But it is not painful and no anesthesia is needed. If polyps are found, your provider can remove them.

Your provider may advise a colonoscopy to look at the rest of the colon.

A colonoscopy is a test of the lower gastrointestinal tract, or digestive tract.

Your healthcare provider will look at the lining of your colon thoroughly with a scope.

If your provider sees any problems, they can thread tools through the scope to take tissue samples or even remove polyps.

Your healthcare provider may advise a CT Colonography. This test is also called a Virtual Colonoscopy. It's less invasive than a Colonoscopy.

This test uses X-rays and a computer to make 2D or 3D images of the inside of your colon. Your provider can then see cancer or polyps.

CT Colonography can be done in a hospital or an outpatient medical center.

It takes about 10 minutes to do, and you don't need a sedative.

During the test, you will lie on your back on an exam table. A small tube will be put into your rectum. Through this tube, air will be sent into your colon. This allows it to be better seen on the images.

The exam table will be moved through an X-Ray scanner, and a few images will be taken. You will be asked to move to your stomach. More X-rays will be taken.

A computer will then make a 3D image of your colon for your healthcare provider to review.

Your provider will tell you how to get ready for your screening test. Follow their instructions, so they see the lining of the colon clearly, and to prevent complications.

No matter what screening test you get, your provider will talk with you about the results and treatment, if needed.