

What are the complications?

Colonoscopy is generally a safe procedure. Complications are rare (less than 1 in 1000 cases) and can include:

- **perforation**
- **bleeding**
- **reaction to sedatives**
- **failure to complete the procedure**

It is important to recognise severe complications and to seek immediate medical attention at the nearest Emergency Department if you feel unwell.

Are there alternatives to colonoscopy?

There are non-invasive tests (such as Barium enema or CT scan) that can be used; however, colonoscopy allows direct visualization of the lining of the colon. Your doctor will discuss these options with you if for some reason a colonoscopy cannot be performed.

ENDOSCOPY UNIT

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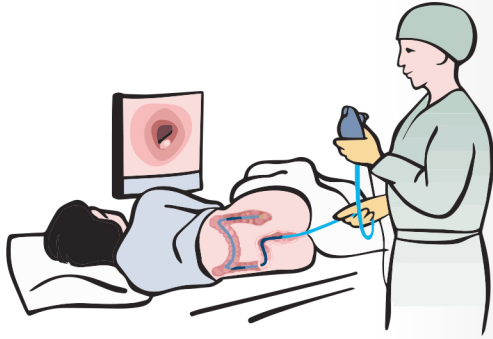
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COLONOSCOPY





What is a colonoscopy?

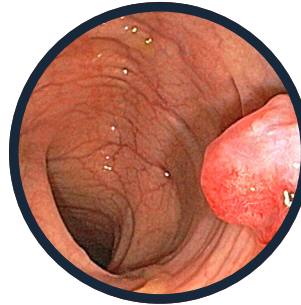
Colonoscopy is a procedure that lets your doctor examine the lining of your large intestine (colon). A thin flexible tube, as thick as your finger, is inserted into your anus and slowly advancing it into the rectum and colon. This instrument, has its own lens and light source and it allows your doctor to view images on a video monitor.

Why do i need the test?

Colonoscopy may be recommended as a screening test for colorectal cancer. Colonoscopy may also be recommended by your doctor to evaluate for symptoms such as bleeding and chronic diarrhea, and to obtain biopsies to help with diagnosis.

What are polyps and why are they removed?

Polyps are abnormal growths in the colon lining that are usually benign (noncancerous). They vary in size from a tiny dot to several inches. Your doctor can't always tell a benign polyp from a malignant (cancerous) polyp by its outer appearance, so he or she will usually remove polyps for analysis. Because cancer begins in polyps, removing them is an important means of preventing colorectal cancer.



Polyp



Cancer

What preparation is required?

The colon must be completely clean for the procedure to be accurate and comprehensive, so be sure to follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Your doctor will tell you what dietary restrictions to follow and what cleansing routine to use. In general, before the procedure you will be instructed to have low fiber diet and you will have to take special oral laxatives.

You may need to stop certain medications before the test (eg blood thinners such as warfarin, clopidogrel, and diabetic medications).

What happens during the procedure?

You will attend the endoscopy unit on the day of the procedure and will have a cannula inserted into your hand. This is so you can be given a sedative to help you relax and better tolerate any discomfort. Colonoscopy is well-tolerated and rarely causes much pain. You might feel pressure, bloating or cramping during the procedure. The procedure itself usually takes less than 30 minutes, although you should plan on two to three hours for waiting, preparation and recovery.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be monitored in the recovery area until the effects of the sedation has worn off. You might have some cramping or bloating because of the air introduced into the colon during the examination. This should disappear quickly when you pass gas.

You can resume diet after the procedure, unless advised otherwise.

Your doctor will explain the results of the procedure to you and an appointment will be given to see your doctor to review the results of any pending test(s).

It is recommended you do not drive or operate any heavy machinery within the same day of the procedure.