

Colonoscopy: What You Need To Know

Colonoscopy

- A colonoscopy is a procedure that lets your health care provider see your large intestine (colon).
- This procedure is done using a long, flexible tube (a “scope”) that passes into your rectum and through your colon.
- You will lie on your left side during your procedure.
- If your health care provider finds abnormal tissue, he or she may take a small tissue sample (biopsy). The sample will be sent to the lab for testing. A biopsy is not painful.
- If your health care provider finds a polyp (a finger-like growth) he or she will remove it through the scope (polypectomy). The polyp will be sent to the lab for testing. A polypectomy is not painful.
- The procedure takes about 15 to 30 minutes.

The Week Before Your Procedure

- You will receive a phone call from a nurse within 1 week of your procedure.
- Tell your primary care provider if you:
 - take warfarin (Coumadin[®], Jantoven[®]) or any type of blood thinners
 - take insulin or a diabetes pill. He or she may want to change your dosages.
- **Three days before your procedure,** stop taking iron pills or iron supplements. Do not eat popcorn, seeds or nuts.

Your Procedure

Location: _____

Health care provider: _____

Date: _____

Arrival time: _____ a.m. / p.m.

Procedure time: _____ a.m. / p.m.

Phone number: _____

Call the phone number above if you have questions about your procedure. If you need to cancel or reschedule, please call at least 24 hours before your procedure.

- Tell the health care provider performing your procedure if you:
 - are allergic to any medicines or latex
 - are pregnant
 - have bleeding after surgery.
- **Arrange to have someone drive you home after your procedure.** You will not be able to drive after your procedure. You cannot take public transportation home alone.
- You will not be able to return to work after the procedure.

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Two Days Before Your Procedure

- You will need to fill your prescription for the prep items or buy them over-the-counter (listed on your instructions) at your pharmacy.

The Day Before Your Procedure

- For the entire day: follow a clear liquid diet. A clear liquid diet consists of water, clear broth or bouillon, soda pop, sports beverages, gelatin (no red gelatin), frozen ice treats on a stick, coffee or tea, and fruit juices without pulp (apple, white grape). You may also have hard candy. **Do not eat solid food.**
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water.
- **Do not drink:** tomato juice; orange juice; any red-, orange-, purple- or dark blue-colored liquids; alcoholic beverages; milk or non-dairy creamer. **Do not eat any solid food.**
- You may use healing ointment (Vaseline[®], Desitin[®]) on the area around your anus to protect your skin from getting sore.

The Day of Your Procedure

- Take any other regular medicines with a small sip of water the morning of your procedure.
- You may have clear liquids up to 4 hours before you are scheduled to arrive for your procedure.
- When you arrive for your procedure, check in at the registration desk.
- Your driver should plan on staying in the facility during your procedure.
- You will be asked to wear a hospital gown and slippers.
- A nurse will review your medical history with you. You will be asked to sign a consent form.
- A nurse will insert an intravenous (IV) line into your hand or arm.

Will It Be Uncomfortable?

- You will be given medicine through an IV line to help you relax and reduce your pain. The medicine may put you to sleep.
- You may feel cramping and gas-like pain.
- Take slow deep breaths to help you relax.
- Tell your health care provider or nurse if you are uncomfortable.

After Your Procedure

- **You must have someone drive you home and stay with you for 24 hours after your procedure.** If you do not have an adult to drive you home, your procedure will be canceled. You cannot take public transportation home alone.
- Do not return to work after your procedure.
- You may resume your normal foods, beverages and medicines.
- Your stools may not return to normal for 3 to 5 days.
- Your health care provider will talk with you about any problems.

If You Had a Polyp Removed or Other Biopsy Taken

- Look for signs of bleeding, such as black or red stools. You may have bleeding up to 2 weeks after your procedure.
- You will receive your results in 1 to 2 weeks.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you have one or more of the following after your procedure:

- any unusual abdominal or shoulder pain
- temperature higher than 100.5 F
- chills
- rectal bleeding.