



Colonoscopy

What is Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy allows the physician to look inside the entire large intestine or colon. The doctor will insert a long, flexible, lighted tube about the size of your finger into your rectum and slowly guide it into your colon. The tube is called a colonoscope (koh-LON-oh-sko-pe). The colonoscope transmits an image of the inside of the colon onto a video screen so the doctor can carefully examine the lining of the colon. The colonoscope is relatively thin and flexible and bends so the doctor can move it around the curves of your colon.

This procedure enables the physician to see things such as inflamed tissue, abnormal growths, and ulcers. It is most often used to look for early signs of cancer in the colon and rectum. It is also used to look for causes of unexplained changes in bowel habits and to evaluate symptoms like abdominal pain, rectal bleeding and weight loss.

What Preparation is Required for the Procedure?

A thorough cleansing of the bowel is necessary before a colonoscopy. Your instructions on what you need to do prior to this procedure are on the back of this sheet.

The medical staff will also want to know if you have heart disease, lung disease, or any medical condition that may need special attention. You must also arrange for someone to take you home afterward, because you will not be allowed to drive after being sedated. As always, it is important to follow your physician's instructions very carefully.

What Can I Expect During a Colonoscopy?

For the colonoscopy, you will lie on an exam table on your left side. You will be given a moderate sedative to keep you comfortable and help you relax during the exam. The physician and a nurse will monitor your vital signs, look for any signs of discomfort, and make adjustments as needed. The doctor will then insert the colonoscope and examine the lining of the colon. You may be asked to change positions at times so the doctor can move the scope to better visualize the different parts of your colon. The scope blows air into your colon and inflates it, which helps give the physician a better view. During the procedure you may feel mild cramping. You can reduce the cramping by taking several slow, deep breaths. When the doctor has finished, the colonoscope is slowly withdrawn while the lining of your bowel is carefully examined and most of the air is removed.

What if an Abnormality is Found During the Colonoscopy?

If your doctor finds an area that needs further evaluation, your physician may take a biopsy to be analyzed by an expert gastrointestinal pathologist. Biopsies are used to identify many conditions, and your doctor may take one even if he or she doesn't suspect cancer or other related condition.

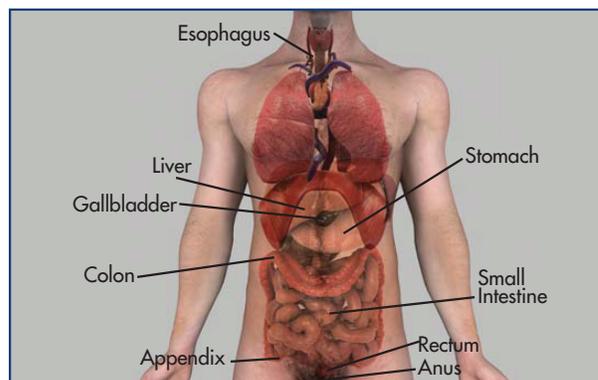
What Happens After a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy usually takes 15 to 30 minutes. The sedative and pain medicine should keep you from feeling much discomfort during the exam. You may feel some cramping or the sensation of having gas after the procedure is completed, but it usually stops within an hour.

What are Possible Complications of a Colonoscopy?

Complications such as bleeding or perforation are rare, but it is important for you to recognize early signs of them. Rarely, people experience severe abdominal pain, fever, bloody bowel movements, dizziness, or weakness after a colonoscopy. If you have any of these side effects, contact your physician immediately. Read your discharge instructions carefully. Medications such as blood-thinners may need to be stopped for a short time after having your colonoscopy, especially if tissue was removed during the procedure. Full recovery by the next day is normal and expected and you may return to your regular activities.

Important Information: The information included on this sheet is intended only to provide general guidance and not as a definitive basis for diagnosis or treatment in any instance. It is extremely important that you consult a physician about your specific condition.



MiraLax Bowel Prep for Colonoscopy

(Split Dose)



PURCHASE AT THE PHARMACY:

- 2 Dulcolax (Bisacodyl) Tablets
- One bottle (238 gram) of MiraLax (polyethylene glycol)
- 64 ounces of any clear liquid of your choice (except red or purple). Most people prefer Gatorade or Crystal Light.

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE PROCEDURE:

Please inform your physician if you are taking blood-thinning medications such as Coumadin, Plavix, Lovenox, or aspirin. Most likely you will be asked to discontinue these medications 3 to 7 days prior to your procedure if approved by your family physician or cardiologist.

TWO DAYS PRIOR TO PROCEDURE:

1. Mix the 238 gram bottle of MiraLax in 64 ounces of clear liquid of your choice as described above.
2. Shake the solution until the MiraLax is dissolved.
3. Refrigerate.

ONE DAY PRIOR TO COLONOSCOPY:

1. You are allowed to eat a low residue meal for breakfast. Example: eggs any way except fried, cereals except whole grain and barley, white or seedless rye toast with butter or margarine, bananas, applesauce, peaches and pears without skin, juice without pulp, coffee, tea.
2. After breakfast... **NO MORE SOLID FOOD! ONLY CLEAR LIQUIDS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY!**
3. At _____ a.m / p.m. take 2 Dulcolax tablets with 8 oz of clear liquid.
4. Beginning at _____ a.m / p.m. drink half (32 ounces) of the liquid drink mixture. This means drink 8 oz of the MiraLax solution every 15 minutes until you have drank 32 ounces. This part of the bowel prep takes about 1 hour.
5. Remain close to toilet facilities.
6. Be sure to stay very well hydrated. Drink extra clear liquids before you go to bed.

ON THE DAY OF THE COLONOSCOPY:

1. Beginning at _____ a.m. / p.m. drink the rest of the solution (32 ounces). This means drink 8 oz of the MiraLax solution every 15 minutes until it is all finished. This part of the bowel prep takes about 1 hour.
2. **AGAIN, DO NOT EAT ANYTHING.**
3. **DO NOT DRINK ANYTHING 3 HOURS PRIOR TO YOUR PROCEDURE.**
4. If you take medication, you may take essential medications (for blood pressure, heart, seizures) on the morning of the procedure with a small sip of water.
5. If you are diabetic, do not take your oral diabetic medicines the morning of the procedure. If you take injectable insulin, give yourself ½ the morning dose. Procedures are cancelled if blood glucose level is over 300.
6. Report to the facility at the time specified by the facility.
7. It is important to take all of the medication and liquids so that your doctor will be able to see your entire colon clearly.
8. A colonoscopy prep will cause the body to lose a lot of fluid. This can result in illness due to the loss of too much body fluid (dehydration). It is important that you prepare your body by drinking extra clear liquids before the prep. Stay hydrated by drinking clear liquids during the prep as directed. Replenish your system by drinking clear liquids after returning home from your colonoscopy.