

Colonoscopy ... What to expect FAQ

Your doctor has asked that you schedule a colonoscopy. Here are some frequently asked questions.

Why did my doctor recommend that I have this test?

Your doctor recommended this test because it is part of your routine health care or you have symptoms that need to be evaluated. Colon cancer is very common and has very few symptoms until later in the course of the disease. About 95% of colon cancers arise from polyps that grow from the inner lining of the colon called the mucosa. It has been shown that removing these polyps actually reduces your risk of developing colon cancer. Colonoscopy is the best test to look for polyps and they can be removed at the time of colonoscopy. In addition, if a colon cancer already exists, we can diagnose and treat it.

Do I have to do anything to prepare for the test?

In order to have good visualization and be able to see polyps or other abnormalities, your colon has to be completely emptied of stool. To do this, you will be prescribed a bowel preparation. There are two bowel preparations that I recommend. One is a series of pills that are taken on a schedule. This is only for healthy individuals with normal kidney function. The other is ½ gallon of solution that you will consume on a schedule. This is for patients with diabetes, kidney disease, or other medical problems. Both will cause you to have many bowel movements and clean the colon. The information from your doctor will help us to determine which preparation is right for you. Regardless of the prep used, you will need to keep yourself well hydrated with clear liquids. Avoid clear liquids that are red in color. Instructions for the bowel preparation will be provided. Many patients say that the prep is the worst part of the test!

Where do I go on the day of my colonoscopy?

Your colonoscopy will take place at the Southern New Hampshire Medical Center Endoscopy Unit. This is an area of the hospital dedicated just to procedures like this one. You are asked to arrive about one hour before your scheduled time.

What will happen when I get there?

When you get there, you will sign a form giving permission for us to perform the procedure. You will change into a gown and an IV will be placed. You will be moved into the actual procedure room when it is time for your colonoscopy.

Will it hurt?

No. You will be given sedation by a member of the anesthesia department. You will be completely asleep and monitored very carefully

How long does the test take?

The test itself takes about ½ hour but plan the whole day. You will be at the hospital for about 4 hours.

What can I do after the test is over?

After the test you will spend at least 1 hour in the recovery room. You must have a ride home and we recommend staying with a responsible adult for the rest of the day. You may eat or drink anything after the test and most patients go back to work the next day without any problems. We recommend avoiding alcohol. You may not drive for the remainder of the day.

Are there risks?

This is an invasive test and there are several risks that you need to know about. There is a risk that a polyp or some other abnormality is not detected. It is the best test out there right now to detect polyps but like any other test, it is not perfect. There is a very small chance that you will have a reaction to the medications that we give you. On rare occasions, your colon can be injured or there can be bleeding that we cannot control through the scope. These are very serious complications and sometimes require surgery to fix. Studies show that these serious complications only occur in about 1 in 10,000 to 20,000 procedures.

For more information from the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons

<https://fascrs.org/patients/diseases-and-conditions/a-z/colonoscopy>

Call our office with any questions or concerns

*Innovative Surgical Care
774-776-2991*