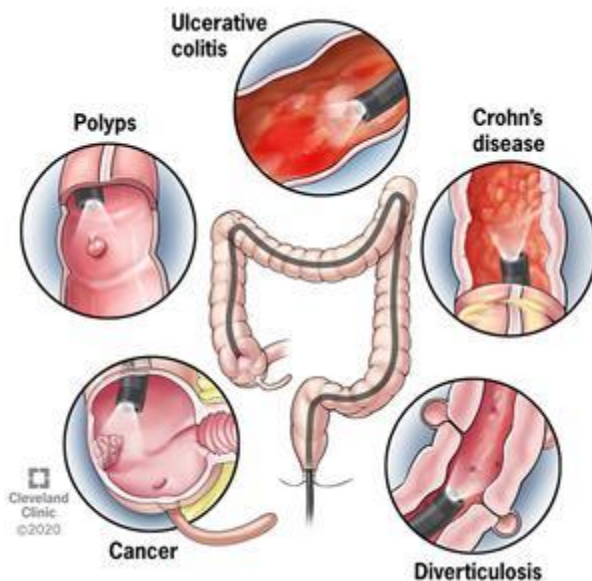


Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is a test that allows a healthcare provider to see inside your large intestine. This procedure is done with a flexible camera called a scope. This test is used to check out symptoms like bleeding, as well as look for polyps and possible signs of colon cancer. It's recommended that adults start getting colonoscopies at age 45.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is an outpatient procedure that is done to examine the inside of the large intestine (colon and rectum). The examination uses an instrument called a colonoscope . This flexible instrument, is very long and includes a camera and the ability to remove tissue (you do not feel tissue being removed). A colonoscopy is commonly used to evaluate gastrointestinal symptoms, such as bleeding, abdominal pain or changes in bowel habits .



A colonoscopy can be used to detect many different types of conditions.

Some people may avoid the procedure due to embarrassment or a reluctance to do the preparation. There are many bowel preparations available, and they come in different sizes and tastes. Also, the colonoscopy team respects your privacy during the entire procedure. Colonoscopies are done to check for colorectal polyps or cancer. Removing polyps early means they can't turn into cancer.

The medical community recommends that anyone who does not have risk factors for colorectal cancer should get a screening colonoscopy starting at age 45. The timing of your colonoscopies varies depending on the findings of your test. You may need to have a colonoscopy at a younger age if you have an increased risk of colon cancer. These risk factors can include:

- Having familial polyposis syndrome (a condition that runs in your family and is linked to an increased risk of forming polyps).
- Having a genetic condition associated with colon cancer.
- Having inflammatory bowel disease, such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.
- Having first-degree relatives with colon cancer (that is, your mother or father, brother or sister, or child).
- Having multiple relatives with colon cancer.

What should I know or tell my doctor before a colonoscopy?

Be sure to tell your doctor exactly what medicines you take on a daily basis. This includes prescription and over-the-counter products like supplements. Your doctor can tell you which medications to avoid and what changes might be necessary. It is possible that you might have to reschedule your medications if you have diabetes or need blood thinners.

You will need to bring a responsible adult with you to accompany you home after the procedure. You should not drive or operate machinery until the next day. The sedation given during the procedure causes drowsiness, dizziness and impairs your judgment, making it unsafe for you to drive or operate machinery.

To have a successful colonoscopy, you will have to do your part. This means following all the instructions about what to eat and drink in the days before the procedure. It also means making sure that your colon is empty so your doctor can see clearly when the scope is inside the colon. This involves what is known as 'bowel preparation.'

Bowel preparation. Colonoscopy prep. Cleaning out your colon. What does this mean?

Your healthcare team will give you plenty of time to prepare. You will get instructions prior to your procedure. It is important to read and follow all of the instructions given to you. If your bowel is not empty, your colonoscopy will not be successful and may have to be repeated. The cleaner your colon, the better chance your provider will have at finding all of your polyps and cancer, which sometimes can be small or hidden.

What can you eat and drink in the days before a colonoscopy?

We recommend avoiding high fiber foods such as nuts, seeds, whole grains, raw fruit and vegetables, beans and corn 3-5 days prior to your procedure .The day before the procedure you will not be able to eat solid food or drink alcohol. You will be able to drink clear liquids, including water, black coffee, tea, ginger ale, apple juice, white grape juice and clear broths. You can have JELL-O® and Popsicles®, but only those that are not red. Drinking extra fluid will help you not become severely dehydrated. You should not drink anything at all for at least four hours before the colonoscopy. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids the day before while you are doing your bowel prep to avoid becoming dehydrated.

What exactly does bowel preparation mean?

There are a few different kinds of bowel preparations, almost all of them liquid. Your doctor will tell you what kind is best for you based on your medical history and their particular preference. They all have the same goal — to get rid of everything in your colon by causing watery diarrhea.

The time of day that you will have to start drinking the solution will depend on when your procedure is scheduled. You will be asked to consume the entire amount of liquid within a specific time period. There is also something called “split-dosing.” In split dosing, you will be asked to drink half of the bowel preparation the night before and then stop. You will get up in the morning and do the other half of the dose in the morning, finishing up at least four hours before the procedure itself. In general, split dosing results in cleaner bowel preparations. If you are having a colonoscopy with intravenous sedation, and you have not been given split dosing instructions, ask your provider if you can do the split dosing.

What can you do to make a colonoscopy preparation easier?

There are things that might help you to drink the solution more easily. These include using a straw to drink the liquid and cooling the solution in the refrigerator before drinking it. You can add lemon drops or chew ginger candy. You will need to stay close to the bathroom during bowel preparation period. A split-dose might make the preparation easier. You will know you have done a good job when your diarrhea looks clear and yellowish, like urine.

You may experience skin irritation around the anus due to the passage of liquid stools. To prevent and treat skin irritation, you should:

Apply Vaseline® or Desitin® ointment to the skin around the anus before drinking the bowel preparation medications. These products can be purchased at any drug store. Wipe the skin after each bowel movement with disposable wet wipes instead of toilet paper. These are found in the toilet paper area of the store.

Take a shower in the morning if you like, but do not use lotions, perfumes. Leave your jewelry, other valuables and contact lenses at home.

During the procedure itself:

You are asked to wear a hospital gown and an IV will be started.

The procedure can be done with sedation, a sedative intravenously (in your vein). You will feel relaxed and sleepy. This step means that the colonoscopy will not hurt.

You will lie on your left side, with your knees drawn up towards your chest.

A small amount of air is used to expand the colon so the doctor can see the colon walls.

The colonoscope is slowly withdrawn while the lining of your bowel is carefully examined.

The procedure lasts about 30 minutes

What happens after a colonoscopy?

You will stay in a recovery room for observation until you are ready for discharge. The amount of time that you are in recovery depends on whether or not you were sedated and what type of pain management medication you received.

You may feel some cramping or a sensation of having gas, but this should pass quickly.

Your responsible family member or friend will drive you home.

Avoid alcohol, driving and operating machinery for 24 hours following the procedure.

Unless otherwise instructed, you may immediately return to your normal diet. It's recommended that you wait until the day after your procedure to resume normal activities.

The doctor performing your colonoscopy will tell you when it's safe to resume taking your blood thinners or any other medications you might have stopped.

If polyps were removed or a biopsy was done, you may notice light rectal bleeding for one to two days after the procedure.

NOTE: If you have a large amount of rectal bleeding, high or persistent fevers, or severe abdominal pain within the next two weeks, go to your local emergency room and call the doctor who performed your exam.

How long will it be before my next bowel movement?

It might take a few days before you have a bowel movement because your colon is empty. It also depends on how much roughage (fibrous foods) you eat.