



Colonoscopy

What is a colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy is an endoscopic procedure that enables your physician to examine the lining of your large intestine (colon) for abnormalities using a thin flexible tube with a camera called an endoscope.

Why is a colonoscopy done?

Colonoscopy is done to evaluate many symptoms including abdominal pain, abnormal bowel movements or change in bowel habits and colon cancer screening. Colonoscopies can be used to identify causes of rectal bleeding as well as evaluate medical treatments of patients with known inflammatory bowel disease.

What preparation is required for a colonoscopy?

For the best and safest examination, the stomach must be empty and the colon must be prepped. Ensure that you follow the colonoscopy preparation instructions given to you by your physician. Please make sure that you bring a current list of medications with you to your endoscopy appointment.

What can be expected during the colonoscopy procedure?

Colonoscopy is usually tolerated well and rarely causes pain. You will receive sedation through an intravenous needle. You will be lying on your side while the colonoscope is advanced slowly through the large intestine.

The image from the camera is displayed on a monitor during the procedure. If an area of the bowel needs to be examined in greater detail, a small instrument will be passed through the scope and a tissue sample (biopsy) will be taken and sent to the laboratory. Results from biopsies are usually available in 10-14 days and the full copy of the results will be sent to your family physician.

If the colonoscopy is being performed to identify sites of bleeding, the doctor might use medication or clips during the procedure to stop the bleeding. If a polyp (usually a benign or noncancerous growth) is found, the doctor generally will remove it during the procedure. Cancer begins in polyps so removing them is important in preventing colorectal cancer.