

Colonoscopy Procedure Tips Sheet

What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy involves careful inspection of the rectum and the entire colon through a camera attached to a thin tube. This allows the physician to look for abnormalities in the colon, including the presence of polyps. Most polyps are precancerous and removing them during a colonoscopy can prevent colon cancer.

Preparing for a Colonoscopy

Before you schedule your colonoscopy, tell your doctor about all the medicines you take. You may be asked to stop taking some medications for up to one week before the procedure. Talk to your doctor about which medicines you may take on the day of the test.

Proper preparation for a colonoscopy is very important if the test is to be successful. The entire colon must be empty and clean so that the walls are visible when the camera is threaded through. This cleansing is done through the use of special laxatives.

The day before the procedure, you should stop eating solid foods and drink only clear fluids such as water, tea, black coffee, juice and broth. You may also eat popsicles and gelatin. You shouldn't eat or drink anything red or purple, as this may leave a residue in the colon that could be mistaken for blood during the test. Six to eight hours before the procedure, you should not have anything to drink.

At some point on the day before your test, you will begin to take the laxative your doctor prescribed for you. It could be in pill form, but more likely it will be a liquid laxative solution. The timing will vary, so follow the instructions you were given by your doctor.

The liquid laxative can taste very salty and unpleasant, and you may feel like you need to throw up. Here are some tips to make it a little easier:

- Bypass your taste buds by drinking the solution with a straw
- Follow each sip of laxative with water or clear juice or soda to take away the taste
- Suck on sliced lemon wedges between sips

The laxatives will cause you to have loose, frequent bowel movements and eventually watery diarrhea, so you will want to stay close to a bathroom. Don't plan any outings on preparation day – instead pamper yourself. Watch movies, read, nap and keep drinking those clear liquids to avoid becoming dehydrated.

Procedure Day

Before your colonoscopy, sedation and intravenous fluids are provided by specially trained nurses under physician supervision. Colonoscopy requires 20 to 40 minutes of sedation time for a screening exam. Recovery time varies from 30 to 90 minutes.

You must avoid any significant activity, including operating a vehicle, until the day after your procedure. A friend or

family member will need to accompany you to and from your appointment.

After your procedure, eat small amounts of food until your bowel returns to normal.

Results and Follow-Up

Initial findings will be discussed with you after your colonoscopy, including the quality of the preparation and the extent of colon examined. Certain findings are made on visual inspection, while others require waiting for biopsy results.

The quality of the bowel preparation and certain risk factors dictate the timing of your next screening test; a poor bowel preparation or incomplete exam will result in a recommendation to have the procedure repeated or have your next colonoscopy performed sooner.

Results of biopsies or other samples sent to the laboratory take time to process and review. You can expect a communication from your physician within 10 days of the procedure.

Feel free to contact your physician's office with any questions or concerns.



Call **1-866-916-9299** to schedule your colonoscopy..