

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS PREPARING FOR COLONOSCOPY

What is a COLONOSCOPY?

A procedure on a completely clean colon without stool in it, using a flexible scope with fiber optics to look at the entire colon (also known as the large intestine) for precancerous polyps, inflammation, causes of bleeding, or colon cancer. It allows for treatment such as removal of polyps, biopsies of unusual areas, or control of bleeding.

How long will the COLONOSCOPY take?

The procedure usually lasts from **20-30 minutes** but can take longer if polyps are present, if the colon is long or twisted, or if excessive scar tissue exists. You will be at the Center that day for approximately **2-2.5 hour(s)**.

Will I be asleep DURING the PROCEDURE?

The procedure is usually done with anesthesia, using a deep IV sedation with an anesthesiologist present. You are asleep but breathing on your own. This is done for your comfort, to prevent cramping or pain during the procedure.

What are my Restrictions after the PROCEDURE?

You must make arrangements to have someone with you the day of the procedure to drive. This is a center policy and we will not allow you to go through the procedure without a responsible person to accompany you home. This person must be prepared to stay in the facility the duration of your procedure. You may not drive, work, or drink alcohol. Most people can return to work and all normal daily activities the morning after their procedure.

What are the possible RISKS?

Complications are very uncommon. They include, but are not limited to, missed polyps, inability to complete the procedure, perforation, bleeding, and anesthetic complications. If one does occur it will be treated appropriately. This could very rarely require hospitalization, medication, additional procedures, blood transfusion, or surgery.

What are the ALTERNATIVES to COLONOSCOPY?

Colonoscopy is the gold standard for Colon Cancer Screening. Alternatives to Colonoscopy include stool testing, sigmoidoscopy (looks only at lower colon), Barium enema (radiology study) and 3-D virtual colonoscopy (CT scan study). Colonoscopy is the only test that allows for biopsies, treatments, and removal of polyps.

When will I know the RESULTS?

Visual results will be given immediately both verbally and written, with you and to whom you direct. You may not remember clearly after the anesthesia. If biopsies were taken, your pathology results will be mailed to you. A report should be sent to your referring physician. If they do not receive one let us know and we will be happy to send them one. After a routine colonoscopy, office follow-up is not usually necessary. Your next recommended colonoscopy is based on family history, findings during the colonoscopy, pathology results or other risk factors.

Does my INSURANCE cover a COLONOSCOPY?

Colonoscopies are frequently covered by insurance. The procedure will be pre-certified by our office if your insurance company requires it. You may still be responsible for a deductible, co-payment, pathology or anesthesia. Some insurance companies have restrictions on anesthesia or procedure location. It is always safest for you to check with your insurance company to eliminate doubts and surprises.