

Colonoscopy



KANAKIA
Health Care

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Overview

A colonoscopy is an examination of the lower part of the gastrointestinal tract, which is called the colon or large intestine (bowel). Colonoscopy is a safe procedure that provides information other tests may not be able to give. Patients who require colonoscopy often have questions and concerns about the procedure. Colonoscopy is performed by inserting a device called a colonoscope into the anus and advancing through the entire colon. The procedure generally takes between 20 minutes to 40 minutes.

Reasons

The most common reasons for colonoscopy are:

- To screen for colon polyps (growths of tissue in the colon) or colon cancer
- Rectal bleeding
- A change in bowel habits, like persistent diarrhea
- Iron deficiency anemia (a decrease in blood count due to loss of iron)
- A family history of colon cancer
- A personal history of colon polyps or colon cancer
- Chronic, unexplained abdominal or rectal pain
- An abnormal x-ray exam, like a barium enema or CT scan

Preparation

Before colonoscopy, colon must be completely cleaned out so that the doctor

can see any abnormal areas. This is vitally important to increase the chances that doctor will identify abnormalities in the colon. Doctor's office will provide specific instructions about how you should prepare for your colonoscopy. The instructions given by the clinic will tell how one should take the preparation.

Some medicines increase the risk of heavy bleeding if a polyp removed during the colonoscopy. Ask doctor how and when to stop these medicines, including warfarin/ Coumadin, clopidogrel/Plavix, Ecosprin or any other anticoagulant (blood thinning) medicine. Do not stop these medications without first talking with your doctor.

Transportation home — If a sedative is given (a medicine to help you relax) during the colonoscopy, one will need someone to take you home after your test.

Procedure

The colonoscope is a long black flexible tube, approximately the diameter of the index finger. The doctor will gently pump air and sterile water or saline through the scope into the colon to inflate it and allow the doctor to see the entire lining. You might feel bloating or gas cramps as the air opens the colon. Try not to be embarrassed about passing this gas (it is just air), and let your doctor know if you are uncomfortable. You may feel like you have to go to the bathroom, which is a normal feeling during the procedure. During the procedure, the doctor might take a biopsy (small pieces of tissue) or remove polyps. Polyps are growths of tissue that can range in size from the tip of a pen to several inches. Most polyps are benign (not cancerous). However, some polyps

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can become cancerous if allowed to grow for a long time. Having a polyp removed does not hurt.

Complications

- Bleeding can occur from biopsies or the removal of polyps, but it is usually minimal and can be controlled.
- The colonoscope can cause a tear or hole in the colon. This is a serious problem, but it does not happen commonly.
- It is possible to have side effects from the sedative medicines.

You should call your doctor immediately if you have any of the following:

- Severe abdominal pain (not just gas cramps)
- A firm, bloated abdomen
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Rectal bleeding (greater than a couple of tablespoons [30 mL])

Although colonoscopy is the best test to examine the colon, it is possible for even the most skilled doctors to miss or overlook an abnormal area in the colon.

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