



COLONOSCOPY

HEALTHY LIVING CHRONICLES

What to Expect During a Colonoscopy Screening?

You received a referral from your primary care physician for a colonoscopy or recently scheduled your appointment. Now what? Here are a few answers to frequently asked questions about this life-saving screening.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a procedure in which a doctor inserts a thin tube equipped with a camera into the rectum and then guides it inside of the colon. The doctor will then gently use air (CO₂) and sterilized saline water given through the tube to inflate the colon to improve visibility. Also, the doctor may use tiny tools inserted through the tube to remove tissue samples or polyps (abnormal tissue growth).

A colonoscopy screening is recommended for:

- ✚ Most people starting at age 50
- ✚ African Americans starting at age 45
- ✚ People who have family histories of colon cancer or polyps at younger ages

What to expect before the colonoscopy?

To prepare for the procedure, your bowels must be completely empty. Your doctor will prescribe special laxatives to help. Also, you will be on a clear liquid diet (e.g., broth, green gelatin, non-red popsicles, etc.) that helps ensure that your doctor can clearly view your colon and any potential polyps.

What to expect during the procedure?

Before the procedure, you will be given anesthesia to put you to sleep. If the physician finds any abnormalities, he/she may perform a biopsy or tissue removal. If polyps are present, they may be removed.

What to expect after the procedure?

When the anesthesia wears off, you may feel bloated and have cramps. It is completely normal to pass gas both during and after the procedure.

After the procedure, you will need a designated driver to help you safely get home. You will be contacted with the results after the biopsy or removal of polyps.

To schedule a colonoscopy screening or for more information, contact our Digestive Disease Center at 240-965-4413 or visit DCHweb.org/digestive.

Source: American Cancer Society



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Contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment.

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