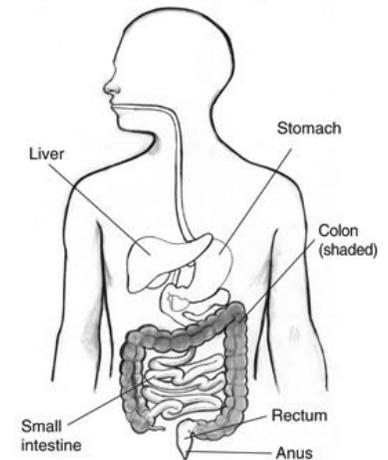


Colonoscopy

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test to see inside the colon and rectum. The colon and rectum are the two main parts of the large intestine.

A colonoscopy can find growths called polyps. The test looks for early signs of colorectal cancer.



Questions to ask your health care provider:

Before you get a colonoscopy, ask your health care provider one or more of the these questions:

- What screening test(s) is right for me?
- How do I get ready for the test?
- Do I need to change the way I eat or stop taking my medicine?
- What's the test like? Will it be uncomfortable or painful?
- Is there any risk involved?
- When will I get results? Who will call me?
- Who will do the test?
- Will I need someone to drive me home?

When do I get a colonoscopy?

Most people should start getting colonoscopies at age 50.

Some people may need a screening earlier.

If you have:

- Inflammatory bowel disease,
- Family history of colorectal polyps,
- Family history of colorectal cancer,
- Familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP),
- Lynch syndrome

talk with your health care provider about screening before age 50.

How often do I get a colonoscopy?

If your last colonoscopy was normal, you should get a colonoscopy every 10 years.

If you need a colonoscopy more often, your health care provider will talk with you.



How do I get ready for the colonoscopy?

Bowel Prep

During this time, all food and waste must be cleaned from the colon. You will be using a clear liquid diet for 1 to 3 days before the test. Some liquids are:

- Fat-free bouillon or broth
- Strained fruit juice
- Water
- Plain coffee
- Plain tea
- Sports drinks such as Gatorade
- Gelatin

Tell your health care provider about all medical conditions you have and any medications, vitamins, or supplements you take, including:

- Aspirin
- Arthritis medications
- Blood thinners
- Diabetes medications
- Vitamins that contain iron

****Do not drink red or purple-colored liquids**

What will happen during my colonoscopy?

1. You will be given medication to help you relax.
2. During the colonoscopy you will lie on your left side on a table.
3. The doctor will insert a long, flexible, lighted tube called a colonoscope, or scope, into the anus and slowly guide it through the rectum and into the colon.
4. The scope blows air into the large intestine to help the doctor see.
5. The scope has a small camera that sends a video from inside the large intestine to a computer screen, allowing the doctor to carefully look at the colon.
6. Once the scope reaches the end of the colon, it is slowly taken out.
7. A colonoscopy usually takes 15 to 60 minutes.



What if there are abnormalities during my colonoscopy?

A doctor can remove growths, called polyps, during a colonoscopy. These polyps are then tested for signs of cancer.

What should I expect after a colonoscopy?

You will recover for up to two hours after the test. You may have cramping or bloating the first hour after the test.

Full recovery is expected by the next day. You should carefully read and follow any instructions the health care provider gives you.

For questions, please call the Utah Cancer Action Network (1-888-222-2542)

Resources:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003886.htm>

<http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/colonoscopy/>
