

## **COLONOSCOPY**

### **WHAT IS A COLONOSCOPY?**

Colonoscopy is a procedure that enables your gastroenterologist to examine the lining of the rectum and colon. It is usually done at an endoscopic center such as New York Endoscopy Center or a hospital. A soft, flexible tube about the thickness of the index finger is gently inserted through the anus and advanced into the rectum and the colon.

A colonoscopy is usually done for:

- As a routine screening for cancer,
- In patients with known polyps or previous polyp removal,
- To evaluate a change in bowel habits or bleeding
- Unexplained anemia and or weight loss,
- Unexplained diarrhea or constipation
- To evaluate changes in the lining of the colon known as inflammatory disorders.

### **WHAT PREPARATION IS REQUIRED?**

In general, preparation consists of consumption of a special cleansing solution a day before the procedure as directed by your physician. Your colon and rectum should be completely empty of stool for the procedure to be performed. This may include clear drinking clear fluids 1-3 days before the procedure. Your physician or his staff will give you instructions regarding the cleansing routine to be used.

Follow your doctor's instructions carefully. If you do not complete the preparation, it may be unsafe to perform the colonoscopy and the result may not be satisfactory. Therefore, inform your doctor prior to the procedure.

You should inform your doctor the medications that you are taking. Most medications can be continued as usual. It is essential that you alert your doctor if you require antibiotics prior to undergoing colonoscopy. Your doctor may provide you with special instructions on use of such medications as, aspirin, Vitamin E, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, blood thinners and insulin.

You will most likely be sedated during the procedure and an arrangement to have someone drive you home afterward is imperative. Sedatives will affect your judgment and reflexes for the rest of the day. You should not drive or operate machinery until the next day.

### **WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED DURING COLONOSCOPY?**

The procedure is usually well tolerated, but there is often a feeling of pressure, gassiness, bloating or cramping at various times during the procedure. An anesthesiologist will normally administer anesthesia that will put you to sleep for 20-30 minutes or the doctor may perform procedure under light sedation that will help you relax and better tolerate any discomfort that you may experience. You will be lying on your side or your back while the colonoscope is advanced through the large intestine. The lining of the colon is examined carefully while inserting and withdrawing the instrument. The procedure usually lasts for 20-30 minutes. In rare instances the entire colon cannot be visualized and your gastroenterologist could request a barium enema.

### **WHAT IF COLONOSCOPY SHOWS AN ABNORMALITY?**

If your doctor sees a suspicious area that needs more scrutiny, a biopsy may be obtained and submitted to a laboratory for pathology report. Similarly, if Polyps are seen, they will be removed and sent for biopsy. The majority of polyps are benign (non-cancerous), but your doctor cannot always tell by the appearance alone. They can be removed by burning (fulgurating) or by a wire loop (snare). Multiple sittings may be required if the number of polyps is large enough. Taking a Biopsy do not imply cancer, however, removal of a colonic polyp is an important means of preventing colo-rectal cancer.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER COLONOSCOPY?**

Your doctor will explain the results to you after your procedure or at your follow up visit. You may have some mild cramping or bloating from the air that was placed into the colon during the examination. This should quickly improve with the passage of the gas. You should be able to eat normally the same day and resume your normal activities after leaving the Center. Since the sedatives impair your judgment and reflexes, do not drive or operate machinery until the next day.

If you have been given medication during the procedure, you will be observed until most of the effects of the sedation have worn off (20-30 minutes). You will need someone to drive you home after the procedure. Call your doctor's office if you have any questions and or you experience any problems.

### **WHAT COMPLICATIONS CAN OCCUR?**

Colonoscopy and biopsy are safe when performed by gastroenterologist who have had special training and are experienced in these endoscopic procedures. Complications are rare, however, they can occur. They include bleeding from the site of a biopsy or polypectomy and a tear (perforation) through the lining of the bowel wall. A reaction to the sedatives can occur. Irritation to the vein that medications were given is uncommon, but may cause a tender lump lasting a few weeks. Warm, moist towels will help relieve this discomfort.

For more information please visit:

Or American Gastroenterology Association at <http://www.gastro.org/patient-center/procedures/colonoscopy>

*IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER*

*This information is intended to provide general guidance only and is not a definitive medical advice. You MUST consult one of our expert doctors regarding your condition, procedure and prep for the procedure for a definitive opinion. Please call and make an appointment at (914)683-1555*