

Colonoscopy Instructions

A colonoscopy is a special test that allows us to visually examine the inside lining of the colon and rectum using a flexible instrument. Your physician may have recommended a colonoscopy for screening for colon polyps and cancer. Colonoscopy is used to screen individuals over the age of fifty or with a family history of colon cancer. Additionally, the test is done to look for reasons for changes in bowel habits, bleeding, unexplained abdominal symptoms, or inflammatory bowel disease (colitis).

At the time of the colonoscopy, growths called polyps may be removed. Information about these polyps and the lining of the colon may be obtained by taking tissue samples called biopsies. The examination is done under sedation. You will be comfortable such that most individuals remember very little of the exam process.

How is colonoscopy performed?

The intestine must be cleared of all residues before colonoscopy. Completing a bowel preparation the day before the colonoscopy does this. Most colonoscopies are done on an outpatient basis with minimal inconvenience and discomfort. The colonoscopy takes 20-30 minutes to perform. You will be given sedation to ensure a comfortable exam. Because of the sedation, you must make arrangements to be driven home.

Total time from arrival to departure from the hospital is about two hours. An intravenous solution (IV) will be started in your arm and medication will be given to help you relax and become drowsy. When you are properly relaxed, the colonoscope will be inserted into your rectum and advanced through your colon.

Most individuals can resume a regular diet following the colonoscopy and normal activities the following day. Your physician will discuss the findings of the colonoscopy with you. If tissue samples (biopsies) were obtained, please contact our office in five days for the results.

Preparation

All preparation is done the day before the colonoscopy. Please read and follow **ALL** instructions listed on the bowel preparation sheet. The objective is to clean out your intestines. This will cause diarrhea, so do not stop the preparation when this happens. This preparation **MUST** take place the day before your colonoscopy. If you get nauseated or begin to vomit, stop preparation and liquids for one hour. Begin again, slowly, and if you still have problems call the office.

Start a clear liquid diet at breakfast the day before your scheduled colonoscopy. This includes clear or strained fruit juices, jello (no red jello), clear broths, black coffee, tea and bottled beverages such as sodas and sports drinks. **DO NOT eat any solid foods or drink any milk or milk products. Nothing by mouth after midnight the day before your colonoscopy.**

You must continue your essential medications according to schedule. On the day of your procedure, you may take your morning medications with a sip of water. If you are diabetic, call your doctor that prescribes your diabetic medication to determine what dosage you need to take the day before your colonoscopy. **DO NOT take your diabetic medication the morning of your colonoscopy!**

You MUST be off your blood thinner:

- **Coumadin – off 4 days before the colonoscopy**
- **Plavix – off 7 days before the colonoscopy**
- **Aspirin – off for 7 days before the colonoscopy**

Please OK these medication changes with your primary care physician or cardiologist before stopping your blood thinner.

Please let us know if you have had a **prosthetic heart valve** or **joint replacement** within the last six months. You may need antibiotics before your colonoscopy.

You will **NOT** be allowed to drive yourself home after the procedure, so please arrange for your transportation prior to your colonoscopy. You will be at the hospital 2-3 hours total. You will be able to return to your normal activities the day after the colonoscopy.

Scheduling

You will be contacted by our office to schedule your colonoscopy. Please read the instructions for colonoscopy and for preparation now. You may then ask questions about the preparation and the procedure when we contact you for scheduling.

Your procedure has been scheduled at the GI Lab, located on 2nd floor of St. Francis downtown, on ___/___/___ at ___:___ am/pm. Plan to arrive at the hospital one hour prior to the scheduled procedure.

If you have any questions, please call the office.