



## Colonoscopy: Before Your Procedure

### What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test that lets a doctor look inside your colon. The doctor uses a thin, lighted tube called a colonoscope to look for problems. These include small growths called polyps, cancer, or bleeding.

During the test, the doctor can take samples of tissue that can be checked for cancer or other problems. This is called a biopsy. The doctor can also take out polyps.

Before the test, you will need to stop eating solid foods. You also will be given instructions on how to clean out your colon. This helps your doctor be able to see inside your colon during the test.

### How do you prepare for the procedure?

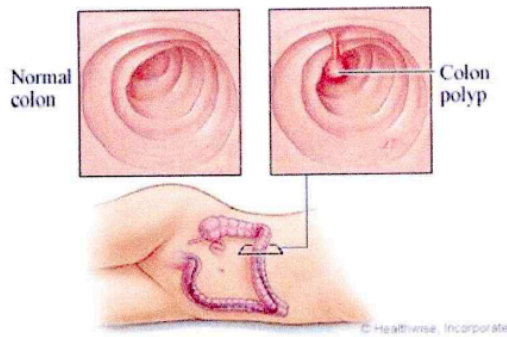
Procedures can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for your procedure.

### Preparing for the procedure

- Be sure you have someone to take you home. Anesthesia and pain medication will make it unsafe for you to drive or get home on your own
- Understand exactly what procedure is planned, along with risks, benefits, and other options
- Tell your doctor ALL medications, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take. Some may increase the risk of problems during your procedure. Your doctor will tell you if you should stop taking any of them before the procedure and how soon to do it
- If you take aspirin or some other blood thinner, ask your doctor if you should stop taking it before your procedure. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do. These medicines increase the risk of bleeding
- Make sure your doctor and the hospital have a copy of your advance directive. If you don't have one, you may want to prepare one. It lets others know your health care wishes. It's a good thing to have before any type of surgery or procedure.

### Before the Procedure

- Follow your doctor's directions about when to stop solid foods and drink only clear liquids. You can drink water, clear juices, clear broths, flavored ice pops, and gelatin. Do not eat or drink anything red or purple. This includes grape juice and grape-flavored ice pops. It also includes fruit punch and cherry gelatin.



- Drink the “colon prep” liquid as your doctor tells you. You will want to stay home, because the liquid will make you go to the bathroom a lot. Your stools will be loose and watery. It’s very important to drink all of the liquid. If you have problems drinking it, call your doctor.

- Do not eat any solid foods after you drink the colon prep.

- Stop drinking clear liquids for a few hours before the test. Your doctor will tell you how many hours this will be.

### What happens on the day of the procedure?

- Follow the instructions exactly about when to stop eating and drinking. If you don’t, your procedure may be canceled. If your doctor told you to take your medicines on the day of the procedure, take them with only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your procedure. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Take off all jewelry and piercings. Take out contact lenses, if you wear them

### At the doctor’s office or hospital

- Bring a picture ID
- You will be kept comfortable and safe by your anesthesia provider. The anesthesia may make you sleep.
- You will lie on your back or your side with your knees drawn up toward your belly. The doctor will gently put a gloved finger into your anus. Then the doctor puts the scope in and moves it into your colon. The scope goes in easily because it is lubricated.
- The doctor may also use small tools to take tissue samples for a biopsy or to remove polyps. This does not hurt.
- The test usually takes 30-45 minutes. But it may take longer. It depends on what is found and what is done.

### When should you call your doctor?

- You have questions or concerns.
- You don’t understand how to prepare for your procedure.
- You are having trouble with bowel prep
- You become ill before the procedure (such as fever, flu, or a cold)
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the procedure