



P R O C E D U R E I N F O S H E E T

COLONOSCOPY

A colonoscopy is a medical procedure that uses a long flexible tube, known as a colonoscope, to examine the inside of the colon. The colonoscope is equipped with a tiny video camera and light at the end, allowing gastroenterologists to carefully guide the instrument in any direction to look inside the colon.

WHY DO I NEED A COLONOSCOPY?

A colonoscopy is an important procedure to check for colon cancer and to treat colon polyps. Polyps are abnormal growths on the inside lining of the intestine; though most are not cancerous, polyps still have the potential to be cancerous. Removal of a polyp is called a polypectomy and is performed during a colonoscopy.

A colonoscopy is also an effective and safe method to examine other problems from which a patient may be suffering, such as blood loss, abdominal or rectal pain, changes in bowel habits or active bleeding from the bowel.

WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE MY COLONOSCOPY PROCEDURE?

You will be given specific instructions to prepare for your scheduled colonoscopy. It is crucial that you follow the PREP that your physician provides you. These instructions will include a special diet the day before the procedure and specifics regarding medication. Additionally, if you take any blood-thinning medication, your physician may request that you stop use for 3-5 days before the test. Failure to properly complete the PREP will likely result in the inability to complete your test. Please contact our office with any questions.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE COLONOSCOPY?

The entire procedure usually takes 30-45 minutes. You will receive sedation from anesthesiology on the day of your procedure to keep you comfortable. During the colonoscopy, you will lie on your left side on an examining table and the physician will insert the colonoscope into the rectum and gently move it through the colon. The colonoscope is equipped with several tiny instruments to aid the physician during the procedure. One slightly inflates the colon to help the physician see the entire colon, another to remove polyps or take biopsies, and a third to stop any bleeding that may occur.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE COLONOSCOPY?

You may experience slight discomfort immediately following a colonoscopy, similar to feeling bloated or having gas, but that soon subsides. Most patients are able to resume their regular diets later that day. A colonoscopy generally requires some anesthesia, which may make patients feel a bit woozy. Under these circumstances, patients are required to have a licensed driver take them back home. Taxis or other forms of hired transportation are not allowed.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OF A COLONOSCOPY?

It is rare for serious complications to occur as part of the colonoscopy procedure. However, they are possible. Complications might include excessive bleeding, especially if a large polyp is removed, or a tear in the lining of the colon, which might require hospitalization or surgery. Your physician will address any concerns you may have prior to the procedure.



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