



# Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is the recommended follow-up test to your abnormal home screening test result. A colonoscopy allows the doctor to examine the inside of your colon (bowel) and rectum. A long flexible tube (colonoscope) with a small camera is passed into your rectum and colon. On a video monitor, the doctor looks for any abnormal areas on the lining of your colon. Sometimes a small tissue sample will be taken. This is called a biopsy.

If polyps (small growths) are found, they can be removed using tiny tools passed through the colonoscope. The samples will be sent to a lab where they will be checked for any signs of cancer.

## **BENEFITS OF A COLONOSCOPY**

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### **A colonoscopy:**

- is the most effective way to diagnose colon cancer, and
- can prevent colon cancer by finding and removing polyps before they turn into cancer.

## **RISKS OF A COLONOSCOPY**

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For most people, a colonoscopy is a safe and straightforward procedure. However, the following rare complications are possible:

- A tender lump or redness might occur where the intravenous (IV) is placed in your arm.
- Medications given may cause breathing or blood pressure problems, a rash, or fever.
- Bleeding may occur after biopsies or removal of a polyp. In rare cases you may need to receive blood or require surgery.

- A hole may occur in the colon. If this happens, you will be given antibiotics, IV fluids or may require surgery. In very rare cases, people have died.

There is also a small chance that a polyp or cancer may be missed depending on how well the colon can be seen. Discuss the risks and benefits with the doctor before you agree to have a colonoscopy. Visit [cancercare.mb.ca/screening/colon](http://cancercare.mb.ca/screening/colon) to watch a video of a colonoscopy.

## **BEFORE YOUR COLONOSCOPY**

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### **Bowel (colon) preparation:**

- The preparation of the colon is the most important part of the procedure that you can control.
- Your colon must be empty so that the doctor can see the lining clearly.
- You will be told what bowel preparation medication (laxative) to take and what diet to follow. Follow these instructions carefully.
- Good preparation allows a quicker examination, better ability to find polyps, and can prevent the need for repeat colonoscopies.

### **Medication:**

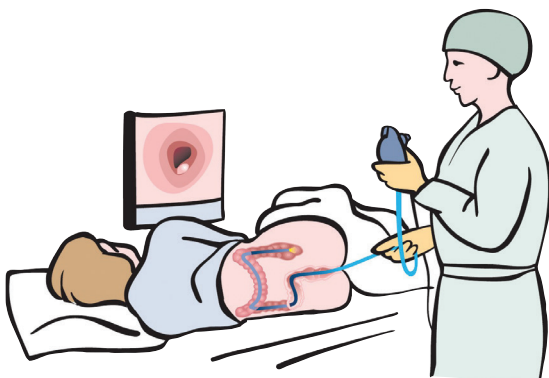
- Continue to take your usual medications including blood thinning medications / anticoagulants such as Aspirin, Plavix, warfarin, dabigatran, rivaroxban, etc. during your preparation for this test unless otherwise instructed. You can take your medication with sips of clear fluids.
- If you are a diabetic on insulin or oral diabetic medications, follow the exact instructions you will be given.

## THE DAY OF YOUR COLONOSCOPY

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**Bring a friend or family member to take you home by car or taxi. You will receive sedatives during the colonoscopy and will not be allowed to drive home.**

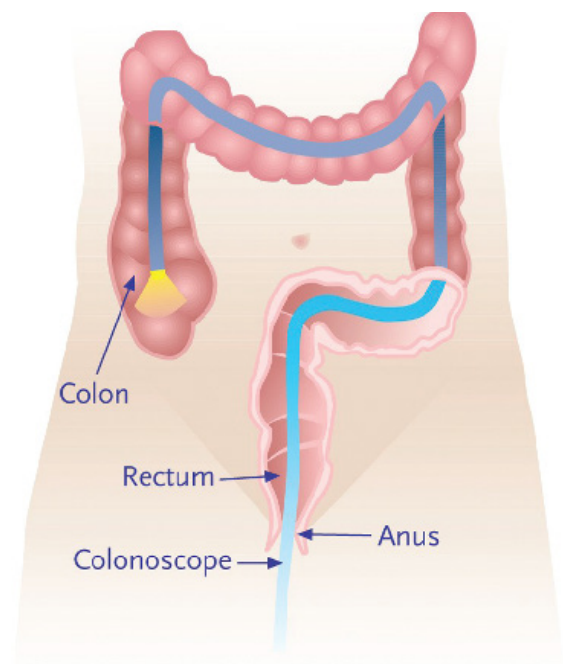
- Arrive at the facility 1 hour before your colonoscopy.
- Bring a list of all your medications.
- If you use a machine for sleep apnea (CPAP/BIPAP), bring this with you to the hospital.
- You may wear your dentures. However, you may be asked to remove them prior to your procedure.
- Don't bring jewelry or valuables with you.
- Don't wear nail polish.
- You will be asked:
  - for your Manitoba Health card and the name and number of an emergency contact.
  - to sign a consent form if you have not already done so.
  - to go to the endoscopy/day surgery department.
  - to put on a hospital gown.
  - questions about your general health and surgical history.
- The nurse will:
  - check your blood pressure, pulse, breathing and temperature.
  - start an IV in your hand or arm.
  - take you to the endoscopy room for the colonoscopy. Your escort will stay in the waiting room.



## DURING YOUR COLONOSCOPY

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- You will be given sedatives and pain medications through your IV.
- The doctor will gently pass a thin flexible tube (colonoscope) into your rectum through your anus.
- Your colon will be inflated with air so that the doctor can see it better.
- You may feel some pressure or a bloating sensation, but you should not feel much pain. If you are having pain, tell your doctor or nurse.
- If polyps are found, the doctor may remove them.
- Biopsies may be taken if any abnormal areas are found within your colon. The test will take approximately 20-30 minutes.



## AFTER YOUR COLONOSCOPY

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- You will be taken into the recovery room. A nurse will monitor your blood pressure, pulse, breathing and temperature.
- You will stay in this area for about 1 hour.
- Once you are able to drink fluids and you feel less drowsy, the nurse will remove your IV. You will be allowed to go home with your escort.

**Get the contact number of the doctor who did the colonoscopy.**

- You will be notified of your results. A letter will also be sent to your family doctor outlining the results and recommendations.
- Discuss with your family doctor if you need to be screened again or if you need further testing or treatment.

**WHEN YOU GO HOME**

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- For the next 24 hours:
  - do **not** drive, take sedatives, drink alcohol, or use power tools.
  - do **not** sign legal papers or make other important decisions.

**You should have someone stay with you overnight if you live alone.**

- Follow the instructions that you take home from the facility.
- You may feel bloated and have cramps from the air in your colon. This will eventually pass. Gradually increasing your activity level will help.
- You may pass small amounts of blood in your stool (1-2 teaspoons or 5-10 ml). This is more likely if you have a biopsy or a polyp removed.
- You may not have a bowel movement for 1 to 2 days. Follow the dietary instructions given to you. Eat your normal diet when you feel you can.

**Call the doctor who performed the colonoscopy if you have concerns or if you experience:**

- fever (38° C or greater) or chills.
- dull abdominal pain or discomfort that lasts more than a few hours after the procedure or is increasing.
- new abdominal pain.
- nausea or vomiting.
- persistent abdominal bloating.
- moderate amounts of blood in a bowel movement (more than 2-3 teaspoons or 10-15 ml).
- black stools.
- pain, redness or swelling of the IV site for more than 48 hours.

**If your doctor cannot be reached, call Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257, or go to the nearest emergency department.**

**Go to the emergency department immediately, if you experience:**

- sharp, steady or worsening abdominal pain.
- passing large amounts of blood or clots (1/2 cup or 125 ml).
- difficulty breathing.