

High Definition Colonoscopy

Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy allows the doctor visually examine the inner lining of the patient's large intestine (colon) for abnormalities by inserting a thin flexible tube into the anus and slowly advancing it into the rectum and colon. This endoscopic instrument, called a colonoscope, has its own lens and light source and it allows the doctor to visualize the inner lining of the colon on a video monitor.

Preparation

To obtain the full benefits of the exam and achieve the highest degree of accuracy, the colon must be clean and free of stool. Our experienced staff will provide instructions on how to do this. It involves following dietary restrictions and drinking a special cleansing solution which flushes the colon clean.

Medication Adjustments

Most medications can be continued as usual, but certain medications can interfere with the preparation or the examination. Inform your doctor about medications you are taking, particularly aspirin, arthritis medications, anti-coagulants and blood thinners (such as warfarin, heparin), clopidogrel, diabetes medications, and blood pressure medications.

The Procedure

Colonoscopy is usually performed on an outpatient basis at an outpatient surgery center. The patient is moderately or deeply sedated. The colonoscope is inserted through the anus and moved gently around the bends of the colon. If a polyp is encountered, a thin wire snare is used to wrap around it. Electrocautery (electric current with heat) is applied to painlessly remove it. Other tests can be performed during colonoscopy, including biopsy to obtain a small tissue specimen for microscopic analysis. The procedure takes approximately 30 minutes, although you should plan on two to three hours for waiting, preparation, and recovery. A recovery area is available to monitor vital signs until the patient is fully awake. It is normal to experience mild cramping or abdominal pressure following the exam. This usually subsides in 1-2 hours or so.

Benefits

A colonoscopy is performed to identify and/or correct a problem in the colon. The test enables a diagnosis to be made and specific treatments to be given. There is a wide variety of indications for colonoscopy, some of the most common ones are: rectal bleeding, colon cancer screening, change in bowel habits, positive fecal occult blood test, anemia, family or personal history of colon cancer or colon polyp, and abnormal findings of imaging test.

Painless biopsies are usually taken for microscopic evaluation. If a polyp is found during the exam, it can be removed at that time, eliminating the need for a major operation later as cancer begins in polyps, removing them is an important mean of preventing colorectal cancer. If a bleeding site is identified, treatment can be administered to stop the bleeding. Other treatments can be given through the endoscope when necessary.

Possible Risks

Colonoscopy procedure is generally very safe when performed by doctors who have been trained with gastroenterology specialty and are experienced in doing such procedure. Mild bloating and distention sometimes occur for about an hour after the exam until the air is passed. Serious risks with colonoscopy, however, are very uncommon. One such risk is excessive bleeding, especially with the removal of a large polyp. This can be immediate, or delayed up to

two weeks later. In rare instances, a tear in the lining of the colon can occur. These complications may require hospitalization and, rarely, surgery. Lesion may be missed on rare occasions especially when the quality of bowel preparation is inadequate. Other potential risks include allergic or adverse drug reactions to the medications, blood pressure changes and/or cardiac or respiratory problems with the use of sedatives. The physician, anesthesiologist, and the endoscopy team also have advanced training to deal with these rare complications. Overall, colonoscopy is considered a very safe procedure and is a life-saving procedure!