



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

COLONOSCOPY

A colonoscopy is one of the best things you can do to prevent colon cancer. This procedure can find and remove growths (called polyps) before they become cancer.

BEFORE:

- What prep will you be prescribing and do I have any other options?
- Why is complete bowel prep important?
- How can I maximize my chance of complete bowel prep?
- Are there certain medications I should stop taking?
- I'm a diabetic or elderly and worry about not eating the day before. Will I have any problems with the prep and should I take my medicine the day of the test? *(Note: Generally the elderly and those with specific health conditions will be scheduled in the early morning to avoid going too long without eating/medications.)*
- Should I try my colonoscopy without sedation?
- What complications are associated with colonoscopies?
- How can I reduce the risk of a complication?
- How long will I retain gas and feel bloated? What can I do to help relieve this? Are there any medications that could help?
- Can I drive myself home? Can I have a taxi pick me up?
- Can I eat right after my colonoscopy?
- Will I be able to go back to work and day-to-day activities?

AFTER:

- How complete was my bowel prep? *(If the prep was not complete the doctor's view of the colon may have been obscured, limiting the value of the test.)*
- Did you reach the cecum? *(Answer should be "Yes"; if they did not reach the cecum, the colonoscopy should not be considered complete.)*
- Did you find any polyps or abnormal tissue while performing the colonoscopy? If polyps were found, how many and did you remove them? If abnormal tissue, was it removed and does a biopsy need to be done to determine if cancer is present?
- How long did it take you to withdraw the colonoscope? *(The colon is actually examined during withdrawal, so moving too quickly can cause the doctor to miss problems. Current studies say that withdrawal time should be 8 minutes or longer.)*
- How long should I expect to see blood in my underwear and bowel movements? What if I pass blood clots? *(Note: Not everyone experiences blood after the procedure.)*
- If I experience a fever, how high should I let it go before calling? Can I take medications to relieve it?
- When do I come for a follow-up appointment?
- What symptoms might suggest I should come back before my next scheduled colonoscopy?

