

COLONOSCOPY INFORMATION

Colonoscopy is a procedure that enables the physician to perform a careful, thorough examination of the large intestine.

Screening for colon and rectal cancer is an important function of colonoscopy. Polyps are common in adults and are usually harmless. However, most colorectal cancer begins as a polyp, so removing polyps early is an effective way to decrease the risk of colon cancer.

Colonoscopy is also recommended for a number of other reasons. Rectal bleeding, iron-deficiency anemia, a recent change of bowel habits, abdominal pain, or persistent diarrhea are several of the more common symptoms requiring colonoscopic examination. Individuals with an extended history of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, a personal history of colon polyps or cancer, or a family history of either polyps or cancer of the colon require periodic examination of the colon.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE A COLONOSCOPY

To complete a successful colonoscopy, the bowel must be clean so that Dr. Hutzenbuhler can clearly view the colon. It is very important that you read and follow all of the instructions given to you for your bowel preparation well in advance of the procedure. Without proper preparation, the colonoscopy will not be successful and the test may have to be repeated.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A COLONOSCOPY

During colonoscopy, patients lie on their left side on an examination table. IV anesthesia, administered by either an anesthesiologist or a nurse anesthetist helps keep patients asleep and pain free. A flexible tube is inserted into the rectum and advanced through the entire five to six foot length of colon. The procedure usually lasts from 30 minutes to one hour.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A COLONOSCOPY

You will stay in a recovery area for observation until you are ready for discharge. You will NOT be permitted to drive for the remainder of the day. You will receive specific discharge instructions from the Raleigh Endoscopy Center or Rex Hospital.