

## **WHAT IS COLONOSCOPY?**

Colonoscopy is the visual examination of the lining of the large intestine (colon) and rectum. The purpose of the exam is to identify any abnormalities by inserting a flexible fiberoptic tube into the anus. The tube, which is about the thickness of your finger, is slowly passed into the rectum and colon.

The results obtained from colonoscopy are useful in diagnosing and treating a variety of symptoms and diseases.

## **HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE EXAM?**

The colon must be thoroughly clean in order for the exam to be accurate and complete. Usually, this consists of drinking a large volume of a solution, which flushes the colon clean. Your physician will provide you with information about cleansing instructions.

## **WHAT HAPPENS DURING COLONOSCOPY?**

Anesthesia will be provided for those patients who wish to be sedated during their colonoscopy. This will be performed by the hospital Anesthesia Department. A needle will be placed in your arm vein through which medication will be injected to help you feel relaxed and sleepy. While lying on your left side, the flexible colonoscope will be inserted, causing you to feel a mild sensation of wanting to move your bowels.

As the tube is moved into the colon, it is common to experience slight cramping or gas. The exam takes between 15-60 minutes and may involve changing positions in order to allow for movement of the flexible tube.

If there is abnormal growth (polyps), it will be removed by applying electrical heat (electrocautery) through the colonoscope. A small tissue specimen (biopsy) may be taken from the lining of the colon for microscopic analysis. Neither test will cause you any discomfort.

## **WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER THE EXAM?**

You can expect to feel bloating for generally an hour afterwards. This feeling will be relieved as gas is passed. Due to the medication, you will probably feel drowsy for a period of time. Your doctor will discuss the findings of the exam and provide you with instructions to follow when you return home. Ask the doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

## **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF A COLONOSCOPY?**

Colonoscopy and polypectomy are generally safe when performed by physicians who have been specially trained and are experienced in these endoscopic procedures.

One possible complication is a perforation or tear through the bowel wall that could require surgery. Bleeding may occur from the site of biopsy or polypectomy. It is usually minor and stops on its own or can be controlled through the colonoscope. Rarely, blood transfusions or surgery may be required. Other potential risks include a reaction to the sedatives used and complications from heart or lung disease. Localized irritation of the vein where medications were injected may rarely cause a tender lump lasting for several weeks, but will go away eventually. Applying hot packs or hot moist towels may help relieve discomfort.

Although complications after colonoscopy are uncommon, it is important for you to recognize early signs of any possible complication. Contact your physician who performed the colonoscopy if you notice any of the following symptoms: severe abdominal pain, fever and chills, or rectal bleeding of more than one-half cup. Bleeding can occur several days after polypectomy.

**SUPREP COLONOSCOPY PREPARATION**

**PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:**

- The day before the procedure**, you may have **ONLY** clear liquids the entire day of the preparation. Clear liquids include: water, Jello (not red or purple), ices, ginger ale, apple juice, or cranberry juice, tea, coffee (with tea or coffee, sugar is OK but **NO** milk or Creamoras), clear broths, sherbet or sorbet (water-based, not red).
- Starting at approximately 3:00 p.m., pour one (1) 6 oz bottle of SUPREP liquid into the mixing container. Add cool drinking water to the 16 oz line on the container and mix. Drink **ALL** the liquid in the mixing container. Follow that by drinking two (2) more 16 oz containers of water or clear liquids over the next hour. Repeat the above mixing instructions at 1:00 a.m.
- If your procedure is scheduled 12:30 p.m. or later, your first dose would be at 6:00 p.m. the night before and the second dose would be at 4:00 a.m.
- Please arrive at the hospital on time and be sure that you have someone to drive you home after the procedure. If taking a cab or elderbus you **must** be accompanied home by an adult other than the driver.
- You may take your regular morning medications with a sip of water unless otherwise directed by your doctor.

Please arrive at: **Harrington Hospital  
Out-patient Desk**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

PROCEDURE TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*THIS IS APPROX. & MAY CHANGE DUE TO HOSPITAL SCHEDULING & EMERGENCIES. WOULD ANTICIPATE AT LEAST 3 HRS FROM ARRIVAL TIME TO DISCHARGE.\***

SENT TO SDS: \_\_\_\_\_

CONSENT: \_\_\_\_\_

H&P: \_\_\_\_\_ SENT \_\_\_\_\_

REF#: \_\_\_\_\_ PA#: \_\_\_\_\_

PATIENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

**COLONOSCOPY**

**ALL INSURANCE PLANS HAVE DIFFERENT BENEFITS, COVERAGE & DEDUCTIBLES. WE ADVISE YOU TO CONTACT YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED PROCEDURE TO BE ADVISED OF YOUR SPECIFIC BENEFITS AND ANY OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES.**

John G. Stagias, M.D.  
Gastroenterology  
428 Hamilton Street  
Southbridge, MA 01550  
Tel.(508)765-1600