

# Colonoscopy



Interior Health  
Every person matters

Pre-Procedure Patient Information

[www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca)

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Procedure \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Arrival \_\_\_\_\_

**If you need to cancel your procedure, please contact your Endoscopist's Office or Hospital Booking Office at least 2 WEEKS BEFORE your procedure.**

## What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a recommended procedure for cancer screening and prevention, and investigation of intestinal symptoms such as abdominal pain or rectal bleeding. It allows a doctor to see the inside lining of the rectum and colon using a special instrument called a colonoscope.

A colonoscope is a flexible tube with a miniature camera attached to one end so that the endoscopist can take pictures of your colon. During a colonoscopy, tissue samples can be collected and abnormal growths can be removed. This is painless as the inside of your colon has no nerve endings.

You will be closely monitored before, during and after your procedure. You may feel bloated with cramping from the air inserted during the procedure that will pass as you expel the air after.

## Who will do the Procedure?

A gastroenterologist, family physician endoscopist, or a general surgeon will explain the procedure to you and perform it. A nurse will assist the doctor and you, as the patient, throughout the procedure. The procedure will take about 30-45 minutes.

## Stopping Medications

STOP **ALL** iron and fiber supplements, including Metamucil, 7 days before the procedure.

If you are taking **blood thinners** and/or **diabetes medications**, call your primary care provider or endoscopist for instructions about your dosage **AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE** the procedure.

Continue to take essential medications such as heart and blood pressure pills early in the morning on your procedure day with a sip of water.

If you have any questions about your medications, call your primary care provider or endoscopist; do not call the hospital.

## Bowel Preparation

- Before a colonoscopy, you will need to clean out your colon. Any residue (stool) left inside may block the view of the colon lining.
- **Ensure to follow the bowel preparation instructions given to you by your doctor, as they may differ from the package.** If your doctor didn't give you additional instructions, follow those provided in your bowel preparation package. Read those instructions 1-2 weeks prior to your procedure.
- Drink plenty of clear fluids the day before your procedure.

*more information on other side →*

Healthlink BC	Nurse	24 hours a day	Daily	<i>Call 8-1-1 to speak with a nurse, ask a dietitian about nutrition, or a pharmacist about your medication.</i>
<b>Call 8-1-1</b>	Dietitian	9 am–5 pm	Mon–Fri	
	Pharmacist	5 pm–9 am	Daily	
	Hearing Impaired	Call 7-1-1		
<a href="http://www.healthlinkbc.ca">www.healthlinkbc.ca</a>				

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# Colonoscopy (continued)

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## How do I get ready?

- Purchase your bowel preparation at your local pharmacy; no prescription is required.
- Wear comfortable clothing to the hospital that is easy to take off and put on.
- Please bring a bag with you to store your clothing and personal items during the procedure.
- Avoid wearing jewelry and scented products such as perfume or aftershave.
- If you have a caregiver that assists you to dress, please have them accompany you to the hospital.
- If you require an interpreter, please bring them with you.
- Expect to be at the hospital for 2-3 hours.
- Bring a list of medications and allergies to the hospital.
- If you wear hearing aids, please wear them.
- Please do not bring valuables, as the hospital is not responsible for any items that go missing.
- If your procedure is done through your stoma, please bring an extra stoma appliance with you.

## Care after the Procedure

- You **MUST** arrange for a responsible adult to take you home after your procedure and stay with you for 24 hours.
- You can resume your normal activities, except those restricted for 24 hours after conscious sedation.
- Take your medications as scheduled, unless told otherwise by your doctor.
- It may take a day or two for your normal bowel pattern to return.
- Drink plenty of fluids as the bowel preparation may cause dehydration.
- Start with a light meal and slowly increase from there.
- **The following is NORMAL:**
  - » Cramping or pressure in your abdomen. This can be relieved by expelling air from the bowel. Walking may help move the air along faster.

- » Small amounts of blood in the toilet and on the tissue paper after wiping.
- » Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea may occur with your next meal.
- » If your procedure was done through your stoma, some stomal bleeding may occur. As well, you may find your stoma bag filling with air repeatedly for a short while.

## Are there any risks?

- As with any medical procedure, colonoscopy has a small risk of complication.
- Approximately 5 / 1,000 people will have a serious complication. Complications can include a reaction to the bowel preparation or medication used for sedation, heart or lung problems, an infection, bleeding from the colon and/or perforation of the colon (hole in the colon).
- If a complication occurs, treatment including antibiotics, blood transfusion, hospitalization, repeat colonoscopy or surgery may be required. The risk of dying from colonoscopy is less than 1 / 14,000. There is also a risk of missing a significant abnormality which occurs in less than 1 / 10 cases.

## Go to the nearest Emergency Department if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Extreme sleepiness.
- Breathing difficulties.
- Skin is pale with bluish coloring to lips, fingers or toes.
- Increasing or unrelieved (severe) abdominal pain, not relieved by medication.
- Passing of blood (more than 1/3 cup or large clots) with bowel movements.
- Persistent nausea and vomiting (more than 16 hours after the procedure).
- Fever of 38.5°C / 101.3°F or greater.