

# Your colonoscopy: What to expect

## What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is the most effective method to detect and prevent colorectal cancer because it allows a physician to visualize the inside of your colon and remove any polyps.

As you age, the lining of the colon may experience growths called polyps, which are the most common precursors to colon cancer. However, if removed early on, you can greatly decrease the chance they turn cancerous.

## Why is it important?

- Early stages of colorectal cancer usually cause **no symptoms**.
- Colon cancer is one of the **most common cancers** in the US but is also one of the most preventable and treatable if detected early on.
- It is the only screening test recommended at **10-year intervals** because it's by far the best test for finding precancerous polyps.
- A colonoscopy is also beneficial to **detect and diagnose other GI diseases** and could help address any symptoms you might be experiencing.

## Are there other options for colon cancer screening?

- There are other options for colon cancer screening. However, a colonoscopy is the most reliable because of its unique ability to detect and remove polyps.
- Alternative options are a Cologuard® or a fecal/stool test. If you chose these alternatives, please be aware of the following items:
  - They can result in a false positive and/or negative result.
  - They are not used to diagnose or treat symptoms.
  - If positive, it will require you to confirm your results with a gastroenterologist and a colonoscopy procedure.
  - A positive result may impact your insurance eligibility for screening coverage, which may result in out-of-pocket costs.

## Quick FAQs

### How do I prepare?

Before your procedure, you will need to be on a clear liquid diet and take a bowel prep medication. On the day of your procedure, you will be under anesthesia and will require transportation by a family/friend. Ride-sharing apps and public transportation are not allowed. Please visit our website or call us to learn more.

### What is the exam process?

- You will be placed under anesthesia and not awake during your exam.
- The entire procedure should take between 20 - 30 minutes.
- You should be able to be picked up around 2 - 3 hours after your appointment check-in time.
- During the procedure, the physician will use a long tube with a camera that will be inserted through your anus and into your colon to look inside your intestine.
- There will be no incisions.
- Following your procedure, you may have cramping or pass gas, but these are normal.
- You can eat regularly after you leave the doctor's office.

### Will this be covered by insurance?

If this is your first colon cancer screening, you are over the age of 45, and you do not have any symptoms, then your insurance should cover the screening. Please call your insurance directly for more information.



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