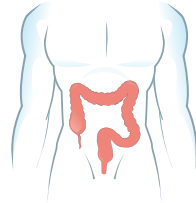


The Inside Story on Colonoscopies

Screening is essential to diagnosing colorectal cancer because the disease lacks symptoms in the early stages. Colorectal cancer develops slowly and can begin as a polyp that grows into the colon or rectum. Men and women age 50 and older should discuss screenings with their physicians. A colonoscopy is the most common screening test.

What to Expect During a Colonoscopy

1 Performed in an outpatient clinic setting, a colonoscopy allows a physician to visually examine the colon and rectum for colorectal cancer. Any physician can refer a patient to an appropriate physician for the test.



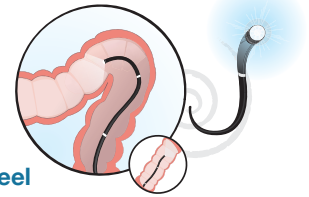
2 The day before the exam, patients take a laxative and follow a liquid diet. This preparation will clean out the colon so the physician can get a clear image during the exam.



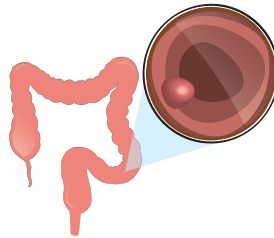
3 The actual colonoscopy takes 30-60 minutes and is performed by a gastroenterologist or surgeon. With anesthesia, patients won't experience pain or discomfort.



4 During the exam, a tiny video camera allows the doctor to see the inside of the colon.



5 Small polyps may be removed, as they could become cancerous. A sample of large polyps or tumors will be tested and further evaluated. Initial results are available shortly after the test. Even following normal results, a repeat test should be done in 10 years or as directed by a physician.



6 After the exam, patients may feel groggy and have gas that causes mild discomfort. Patients will need someone to drive them home because of the effects of anesthesia.



Other Screening Tests Physicians May Recommend

Fecal Occult Blood Test or Fecal Immunochemical Test: Annual, noninvasive methods can detect small traces of intestinal bleeding caused by cancerous tumors or large polyps. Patients use a home test kit to collect stool samples and return them to a

physician for evaluation. Based on results, patients may be referred for a colonoscopy.

Sigmoidoscopy: Performed every five years, this exam requires the same preparation as a colonoscopy, but it looks inside the rectum and lower portion of the

colon. It takes 10-20 minutes and requires no sedation. Patients with abnormal results are referred for a colonoscopy.

For more information about colorectal cancer and screenings, visit www.TexasOncology.com