

# Colonoscopy

## VG Site

My specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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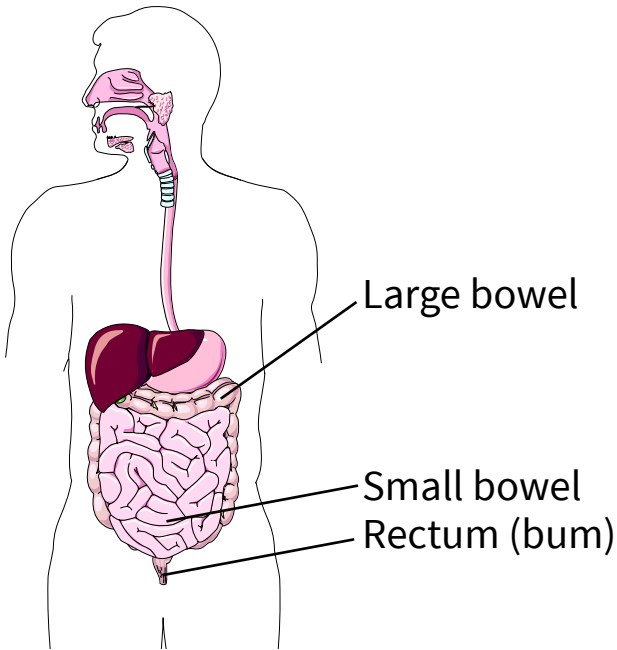
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# Colonoscopy

## What is a colonoscopy?

- This is a test to look at your large bowel. The large bowel is also called the large intestine or the colon.



- This test is done by a specialist using an endoscope (a flexible tube with a light on the end).

Endoscope



## What are the risks of this test?

A colonoscopy is a low risk procedure . As with any procedure, there are still some risks. Your specialist will talk with you about the risks before your test.

### Possible risks include:

- › The specialist may not see small polyps, especially if your bowel was not cleaned carefully (5 to 10% chance). You can lower this risk by cleaning your bowel as told by the specialist.
- › A tear in your bowel wall (1 in 1,000 to 1 in 2,000 chance). If this happens, you may need surgery to fix the tear.
- › Bleeding, if a polyp was taken out (1 in 200 to 1 in 500 chance)
- › Bleeding, if a tissue sample was taken (1 in 10,000 chance). This may stop on its own, or may need more treatment.
- › An infection from the equipment used for the test (1 in 1.8 million chance)
- › A reaction to the sedation medication
- › Soreness and/or a lump where the intravenous (I.V.) tube was put in. These should go away over a few weeks.
- › The specialist may not be able to finish the test because of technical problems, or if your bowel was not cleaned the right way

## How do I get ready for this test?

You may have sedation (medication to help you relax) during this test. This is rare.

- If you have sedation, you must have a responsible adult:
  - › stay in the hospital during your test.
  - › take you home after your test.
  - › stay with you overnight.

If this is not possible, call your doctor before the test. We may have to cancel your test.

### Before your test:

- A booking clerk will call you to give you information about your appointment.
- We will give you the name of the specialist who will do your test, and the date, time, and place of your test.
- Plan to be off work the day **before** your test, so you can clean your bowel.
  - › Plan to be off work the day of your test, too.
  - › Most people can go back to work the day after their test.
- **Your bowel must be empty to do this test.** Stool (poop) or fluids may make it hard to see the inside of your bowel.

- **Your specialist will give you instructions for cleaning your bowel. Please follow these instructions carefully.**
- If your bowel is not cleaned the right way:
  - › the test will be less accurate.
  - › the specialist may not be able to finish the test.

## **14 days (2 weeks) before your test**

- **Do not eat:**
  - › Seeds (like pumpkin seeds, poppy seeds, or sesame seeds)
  - › Kernels (like corn, oats, or quinoa)
- Call your specialist if you need antibiotics for tests or dental work. Ask your specialist if you are not sure.
- **Tell the booking clerk and your specialist if you are taking these medications as these can raise your risk of bleeding:**
  - › Blood thinners like ASA (Aspirin<sup>®</sup>), warfarin, heparin (Fragmin<sup>®</sup>), dabigatran (Pradaxa<sup>®</sup>), rivaroxaban (Xarelto<sup>®</sup>), apixaban (Eliquis<sup>®</sup>), edoxaban (Lixiana<sup>®</sup>)
  - › Antiplatelets like clopidogrel (Plavix<sup>®</sup>), prasugrel, ticagrelor (Brilinta<sup>®</sup>)
- Tell your specialist if you take medication and/or insulin for diabetes. You may need to follow special instructions for taking these before your test.

- Tell your specialist if you have heart or lung disease.
- Tell your specialist if you are allergic to any medications.

**If you need to cancel your test, please call your specialist at least 3 days (72 hours) before your test is scheduled. This will give us time to book another patient.**

## **The day before your test**

- Follow the instructions given to you by your specialist for cleaning your bowel.
- Drink your bowel prep liquid **and** 3 to 4 L of clear fluids. Clear fluids include:
  - › Water
  - › Apple juice
  - › Sports drinks (like Gatorade® or Powerade®) **that are not red**
  - › Clear or light-coloured pop (like Sprite® or ginger ale)
  - › Tea (**without milk or cream**)
  - › Clear soup broth

## The day of your test

It is very important to follow these instructions:

- Your stomach must be empty.
- **Drink only clear fluids.**
- If you take medication for your heart, blood pressure, or breathing, take your medication as usual.
- Bring your blood glucose testing supplies with you to the hospital, if needed.
- **Bring a list of all your medications** (including prescription and over-the-counter medications, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal medications, vitamins, and supplements) with you to the hospital.
- Bring the health questionnaire you got in the mail with you to the hospital.
- **Do not wear any jewelry or bring any valuables with you to the hospital.** The hospital is not responsible for the loss of any items.
- **Do not use scented products.**  
Nova Scotia Health is scent-free.

## Where do I go for my test?

**You must register at the kiosk on the main floor of either the Dickson Building (main entrance) or the Centennial Building (main entrance).**

- Then go to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the Victoria Building at the Victoria General (VG) site. Check in at the registration desk.
- Be sure that you have enough time to park before your appointment. Parking at the VG site is limited.

## How is the test done?

- An I.V. tube will be put in your hand or arm. You may be given medication to help you relax, and to help with any pain.
- The specialist will put the endoscope into your rectum and slowly move it through to your large bowel.
- They will use the endoscope to put air into your large bowel. This will make your bowel get bigger so they can see it better.
- The air may cause mild cramping and/or pain, or give you gas. You may feel like you need to poop.
- The specialist may take out polyps (see next page) or take a tissue sample.



- The test will take up to 60 minutes (1 hour).

## **What are polyps and how are they taken out?**

- Polyps are small pieces of tissue that can form on, or in, an organ in your body (like your bowel).
- They are taken out by running an electrical current through a wire wrapped around the polyp.
- The inside of your bowel has no nerve endings. This means you will not feel any pain if you have polyps or tissue samples taken out during your test.

## **What will happen after the test?**

- You will be taken to the recovery area. You will spend about 30 to 45 minutes there.
- You may feel like you need to pass gas or have a bowel movement (poop). Please try to pass the gas. This feeling should not last long.

## **If you had sedation:**

- **You must have a responsible adult take you home after your test and stay with you overnight.**
- **Do not walk home. You may take a bus or a taxi home only if a responsible adult goes with you.**

**For the next 24 hours (1 day) after sedation:**

- Do not drive a car or use any heavy machinery.
  - Do not drink alcohol.
  - Do not care for others (including children).
  - Do not sign any legal or important papers, or make any financial (money) decisions.
- You may see small amounts of blood in your first couple of bowel movements. This is normal if a polyp or a tissue sample was taken out.

**Call your doctor if you have any of these symptoms after your test:**

- › A lot of bleeding or bleeding that does not stop
- › Dizziness

**If you cannot reach your doctor, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**

**If you had a polyp or a tissue sample taken:**

- Do not take pain medication or blood-thinning medication for 7 days (1 week) after your test. These medications can make you bleed more.

# Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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