



A colonoscopy is a procedure which involves using a long, flexible tube to look inside the colon. The tube has a tiny video camera and light at the end. The tube moves all around the inside of the colon and shows images on a screen.

You will need to drink a bowel prep solution to clean out your bowels.

### About colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is a way to check for colon cancer and to remove colon polyps. Polyps are abnormal growths inside the colon. They vary in size and shape. Most are not cancer but some can turn into cancer. You cannot tell if a polyp is cancer by looking at it.

Colonoscopy can also be helpful to figure out problems such as blood loss, stomach or rectal pain or changes in bowel habits.

Tiny instruments can be passed through the tube and used to take samples within the colon, treat bleeding or do other treatments.

### Possible complications

Colonoscopy is a safe procedure. Possible complications include:

- perforation or injury of the colon wall that may need surgery to fix
- heart and breathing problems
- bleeding

These problems are unlikely and their chance of occurring depends on other medical conditions and what is done during the procedure. Colonoscopy is not perfect, and some abnormalities such as polyps or cancer may be missed.

### Before your procedure

**3 days** before the procedure: stop taking all iron supplements and fibre supplements such as Metamucil.

Follow the instructions on the bowel prep container for filling with water. The total amount you will need to drink is 2 litres.

You can mix the bowel prep and put in the fridge the day before your procedure. Chilling improves taste.

### 1 day before your procedure

- Last solid meal is breakfast.
- Drink only clear fluids until your procedure.

### At 4:30 pm

- Take the 2 Dulcolax pills provided with the prep.
- Drink 1 cup of bowel prep at 6:00 pm. Drink 3 more cups of bowel prep every 10 minutes until the solution is gone.

**Stay near a bathroom** – you will have frequent, watery bowel movements.

## Day of colonoscopy

- You may need to wake up early.
- 4 hours before your appointment take the 2 Dulcolax pills provided with the prep. Drink the rest of the bowel prep.

**Do not eat or drink for 3 hours before your appointment.**

## Medications

Take your usual medications on the day of the test with sips of water. Your doctor may not want you to take blood thinners or diabetes medications, and will discuss this with you.

## During your colonoscopy

The procedure takes about 30 minutes. An intravenous line (IV) may be placed to give medication to make you drowsy and more comfortable. You will be awake, but may not remember much of the experience.

A nurse will be in the room and your blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen will be watched.

When the tube is inserted you may feel as if you need to move your bowels. You may feel some cramping or fullness but there is generally no discomfort.

## After the colonoscopy

You will stay for in the recovery area until you are awake and ready to go home. You will be given instructions on how to care for yourself when you get home.

Rest for the remainder of the day. You may have minor problems such as bloating or cramping, but should go away within 24 hours.

## Arrange a ride home

Plan to be at the hospital for about 1 to 3 hours, from start to finish.

To go home safely after sedation, an adult must pick you up in the Endoscopy Room and take you home.

**You must have an adult accompany you home even if you take a taxi or bus.**

For 24 hours after your colonoscopy you cannot:

- drive a vehicle
- ride on a motorcycle
- operate machinery
- drink any alcohol

## Patient Education

Patient Education videos are available from the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology.

[www.cag-acg.org/posters-related-tools/110](http://www.cag-acg.org/posters-related-tools/110)

For more information about digestive health and tests:

[www.gastro.org/patient-center](http://www.gastro.org/patient-center)

**Clear Fluids** includes any fluid that you can see through that is not red or purple. Some examples include water, juice, pop, sports drinks, popsicles, jello, tea or coffee (with no milk).

## Special instructions

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## Where to go for your colonoscopy

Date \_\_\_\_\_.

Come to the hospital at \_\_\_\_\_.

### Hamilton General Hospital

Check in at Patient Registration on the Main Level.

Then go to Endoscopy on the Main Level.

Phone 905-521-2100 x44932

### Juravinski Hospital

Check in at Patient Registration on the main floor.

Then go to Section B, Level 3, Endoscopy Department.

Phone 905-521-2100 x42334

### McMaster University Medical Centre

Check in at Patient Registration on the main floor. Then take the yellow elevators to the 4th floor. Turn left and follow the hallway to the 4X area on the left. Follow the signs to Endoscopy, and check in at the reception desk.

Phone 905-521-2100 x76924

## Bring to the hospital

- Bring a list of your medications and allergies with you.
- If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar as usual. Bring the results to the hospital.

If you have questions about the procedure or need to change/cancel your appointment, please call the hospital where you are having your procedure.