



Colonoscopy/lower endoscopy

What is a colonoscopy/lower endoscopy?

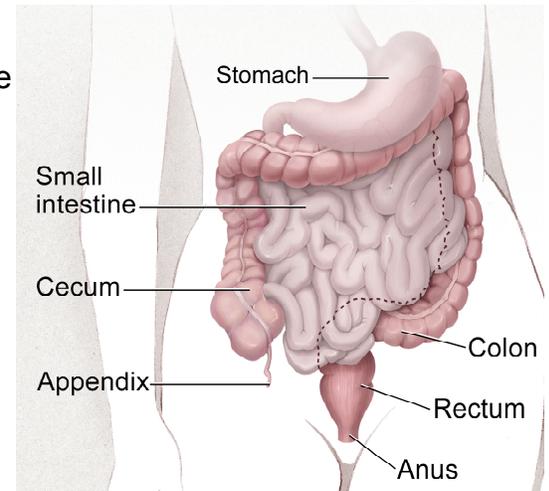
Colonoscopy is a procedure that allows your doctor to see the entire length of your large intestine.

You may be familiar with a similar procedure called sigmoidoscopy. Colonoscopy is a longer procedure than a sigmoidoscopy: the doctor will start the exam in your rectum, go through the descending, transverse, and ascending colon, and all the way to the cecum.

Why do I need this procedure?

This procedure can help your doctor to diagnose cancer early or find out why you have had a change in bowel habits.

It allows your doctor to see inflamed tissue, unusual growths, ulcers, and bleeding. If needed, your doctor can also take tissue samples (biopsies) that can be studied in a laboratory.



Preparation To enable the doctor to see your colon clearly, its entire length must be clear of stool.

- You may be required to be on a low fiber diet for a few days before your procedure, followed by a liquid diet the day before your procedure.
- Liquid foods can include plain tea, broth, non-red gelatin, or a Popsicle.
- You will take one or several laxatives the night before the procedure.
- You should not eat or drink the day of the procedure (at least 6 hours).
- **You must arrange for someone to drive you home afterwards.** Because you will be given sedation during this procedure, you should not drive yourself.
- Tell your doctor about all the medications you take, for example, medications for blood pressure or diabetes. This is important, because they may affect how fast your blood clots, as well as your heart rate, blood pressure, or blood sugar.

Procedure

- To keep you relaxed and pain free during this procedure, you will be sedated. You will feel sleepy, but you will be able to respond to simple commands. Sedation medication will be given to you through your vein.
- The doctor will inject air into your colon. The extra air enables your doctor to see your whole colon.
- Your vital signs will be checked often during the procedure, and for 60 minutes after the procedure.
- Colonoscopy takes 30 to 60 minutes.

After the Procedure

- You may feel gas, bloating, and cramps after the procedure.
- Resume your regular diet unless your doctor or nurse tells you otherwise.
- You may see redness where you received medication through your vein. This should go away within a few days.
- Take your usual medications, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- If your procedure was done as an outpatient, you must leave with a responsible adult.

Special Instructions

- Do not drive a car for 24 hours after your procedure
- If you are unable to tolerate the diet or clear your colon as needed before this procedure, please contact your doctor.

Feel free to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you have about this procedure. They will be happy to answer them.



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Questions about the Clinical Center?
OCCC@cc.nih.gov

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National Institutes of Health
Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical
Center Bethesda, Maryland 20892