

What happens after a colonoscopy?

If you have had sedation, you will be considered legally impaired. You may feel sleepy after the procedure, so please have an adult accompany you home. You cannot drive until the following day. It is recommended that you do not operate equipment or do not do any strenuous activities. You should not be responsible for the care of another person. You should not sign legal papers, drink alcohol or use recreational drugs until the following day. You will be able to resume your regular diet and medications after your colonoscopy, unless otherwise directed by the doctor and/or nurse.

Who to Contact?

Call **911** if you have: Shortness of breath.

Call your **doctor** immediately if you have any of the following problems after your colonoscopy:

- Chills or fever (38.5C/101.3F and over).
- Severe belly pain or “gas pains” that do not go away.
- Rectal bleeding of more than 1/2 cup or black tarry stool.

If your doctor is not available, call **811** or go to the nearest **Urgent Care Clinic/Emergency Department**.

islandhealth.ca

Resources and Supports

We aim to make this appointment as comfortable as possible by creating a welcoming and trusting environment through respectfulness and sensitivity to patient needs. However, we realize that the procedure performed can be difficult and uncomfortable for many individuals; both physically and emotionally. If you are finding yourself experiencing ongoing difficulties relating to today's procedure, we encourage you to reach out and talk about it with someone you trust, such as family, friends, community members, or professional care providers.

Some available community services are:

- Healthlink BC - 811
- 211 Helpline
- Vancouver Island Crisis line
1-888-494-3888
- First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness
1-855-242-3310 or hopeforwellness.ca
- Métis Crisis Line
1-833-MétisBC (1-833-638-4722)
- Kuu-Us Crisis Line
1-800-588-8717
- Trans Life Line
1-877-330-6366

Although we strive towards excellent care for all, we acknowledge that this may not be everyone's experience. In order to better our services and meet the needs of others, we welcome feedback.

Please contact the Patient Care Quality Office:

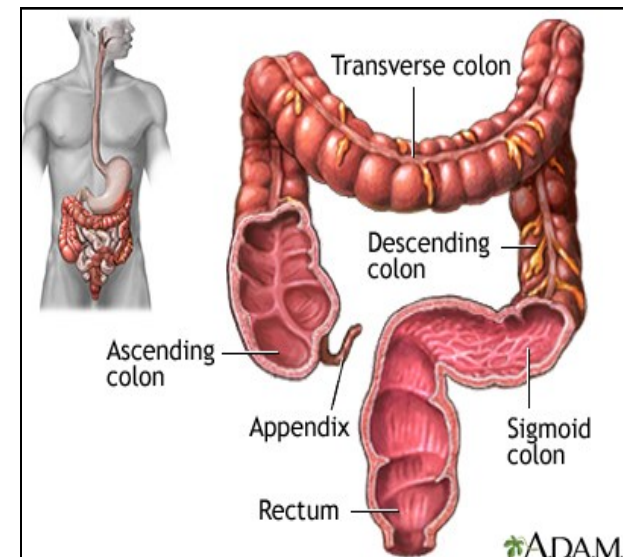
P: 250-370-8323 Toll-free: 1-877-977-5797

E: patientcarequalityoffice@islandhealth.ca

Colonoscopy

Patient Information

“Excellent health and care for everyone,
everywhere, every time”



Outpatient Locations

What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a procedure that takes about 20-45 minutes to complete. It looks at the inner lining of the colon. A thin flexible tube with a camera is inserted by the doctor into your rectum (from behind) and is advanced along the colon. Air is used to expand the colon for better viewing. You may feel cramps or “gas” like pressure at times during the procedure. If you have an abnormal growth of tissue (polyp), the doctor can usually remove it during the colonoscopy. A small piece of tissue (biopsy) from your colon may also be taken to rule out microscopic or other concerns. If the doctor takes a polyp or a biopsy, you will not feel it. The results of the colonoscopy will be sent to your primary doctor.

Reasons for Colonoscopy

Your doctor might order a colonoscopy if you have:

- Blood in your bowel movements.
- A change in your bowel habits.
- Unexplained weight loss
- A condition called anemia, that can make you feel tired and weak.
- Long-term belly or rectal pain that you cannot explain.
- Abnormal results from a different type of colon test.
- A history of colon cancer or polyps in you or your family member.

BC Cancer (bccancer.bc.ca) has a video about colonoscopy available in four different languages:

<https://youtu.be/aqf8-Qwq8w8>



Colon Preparation

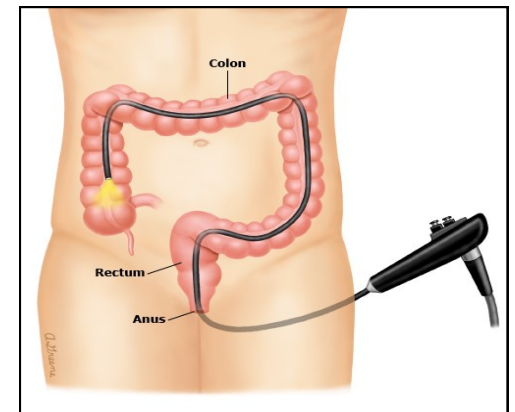
Your doctor’s office will give you instructions about what to do before a colonoscopy. Make sure you read the instructions as soon as you get them. It will tell you what foods you can and cannot eat. It will also tell you if you need to stop taking any of your usual medication beforehand. Your doctor will give you a prescription for a special drink that causes watery diarrhea. It is important to drink all of it, so that your colon is clean enough for the doctor to inspect the inside lining. A clean colon also makes the test easier to do and more comfortable. Let your doctor know if you have trouble getting ready for your colonoscopy.

The Day of Your Colonoscopy

You cannot drive if you are receiving sedation, so please arrange a ride to and from the hospital. Have your Care Card and a list of your medication for the clerk when you check in. A nurse will interview you in the admission area to gather information for your health record. You will be asked to take off your clothing, put a gown on, and lay down on a stretcher. The nurse will start an IV (intravenous line). If you wish to have the procedure, you will need to sign a consent form when you feel comfortable with the information you have received. As with any medical procedure, there is a possibility of complications. Ask your nurse or doctor if you have questions about the risks and/or benefits of the colonoscopy prior to the procedure. You will be brought into the procedure room and attached to the monitoring equip-

ment and oxygen. You will be asked to roll onto your side. Your doctor will give you conscious sedation (medication in the IV) to help you relax and reduce discomfort and anxiety during the procedure. It is normal to be somewhat awake, but you may also feel “sleepy” or “woozy”. The goal during the procedure is to keep you comfortable. You may be asked to change positions throughout the procedure to help with any discomfort. The conscious sedation affects everyone differently and can also alter your memory. You may remember all of the procedure, parts of it or none of it.

When the colonoscopy is over you will be taken to the recovery room. You will be monitored for 30 minutes or more. A nurse will explain your discharge instructions. If you have had sedation, you will need to stay in the discharge area until your previously arranged driver can accompany you home.



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