

# PATIENT INFORMATION

A publication of West Tennessee Healthcare

## Colonoscopy

### What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test that is done to see inside the colon (large bowel). The colonoscope is a long flexible tube that is put up the rectum into the large bowel (colon). This test is used to help check for problems in the lower bowel such as polyps, inflammation, hemorrhoids, bleeding, or diverticular disease.

### Where is it done? How long does it last?

The test is usually done in the GI Lab on the first floor of the hospital. However, it can be done in the patient's room if he or she is in the Intensive Care Unit and not able to go to the GI Lab. The test usually takes 15 to 30 minutes. This does not include time going to and from the Lab or in waiting for the test to start.

### What special preparation is needed?

- For the best possible examination, the colon must be completely empty of waste material. Laxatives or enemas (sometimes both) are taken before the colonoscopy. Your doctor will choose the method that is best for you and will talk with you about what to do.
- A clear liquid diet the day before the test is best.
- You cannot eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the test.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form giving the doctor permission to do the test.

### What can I expect right before the test?

If you are a patient in the hospital, you will be taken to the GI Lab on a stretcher. Your nurse will make sure you have an IV (a needle in a vein) before the test so that you can be given medicine to help you relax. Your family can wait for you in your room.

If you are coming into the hospital on the day of your test, you will check in through the Outpatient Admitting area. A staff member will take you to the GI Lab when it is time to get you ready for your test. Your family will be shown where to wait. The nurse in the GI Lab will help you to get undressed and will start your IV.

### What can I expect during the test?

- You will be in a light sleep during the test. Most people sleep through the exam and never recall the actual test itself.
- While you are lying on your left side, the doctor will insert the tube into your rectum and up into the colon to look at the inside of the colon.
- There may be some discomfort during the colonoscopy, but it is usually mild. Tell your doctor if you are having pain.

### **What can I expect right after the test?**

- If you are a patient in the hospital, you will be taken back to your room after the test. If you are having the test done as an outpatient, after the test you will be taken to a recovery area where you will wake up. When you are fully awake, you will be allowed to go home.
- You may feel drowsy and sleep for a short time.
- You may also pass large amounts of gas or feel bloated from the air put into your colon during the test. This is normal and usually goes away as you move around.
- Your IV will be taken out when you wake up and are alert.
- After the colonoscopy, you will be able to resume your regular diet unless you are told otherwise.
- If you are an outpatient, you must have someone to drive you home. **You will not be allowed to drive yourself home.**

### **Call the doctor if you have:**

- Nausea or vomiting
- Bloating or abdominal cramping that does not go away after the test
- Blood in your bowel movements
- Pain not controlled by your pain medicine
- Any other questions or concerns

If you have any questions about your colonoscopy, write them down here so you can remember to ask your doctor or nurse. \_\_\_\_\_

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***We are a tobacco-free property. No smoking or tobacco use on our campus.***