

Even if you feel alert after the procedure, your judgment and reflexes may be impaired by the sedation for the rest of the day. This makes it unsafe for you to drive or operate machinery after your procedure. Make no important decisions on the day of your procedure.

You may have some cramping or bloating because of the air introduced into the colon during the examination. This should disappear quickly with the passage of gas. **Generally, you should be able to eat after the colonoscopy, but your doctor may further restrict your diet and activities, depending on what took place during the procedure. This is especially true after polypectomy.**

### What are the possible complications of colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy and polypectomy are generally safe when performed by physicians who are specially trained and are experienced in endoscopic procedures. You will be monitored carefully during the procedure. A minor complication would be localized irritation of a vein where medications were injected. This may cause a tender lump, lasting several weeks, but this will eventually go away. Applying warm compresses to the area may relieve discomfort. Major complications would include perforation, bleeding, or anesthesia reaction. Perforation is a tear through the bowel wall, which generally requires immediate surgery. Bleeding may occur from the site of a biopsy or polypectomy. This may occur within a few days, or at times more than a week after the procedure. Bleeding is usually mild and stops on its own. A repeat colonoscopy may be required to control bleeding. Rarely, blood transfusions or surgery may be required. Other potential risks include a reaction to the anesthesia used, which may cause cardiac or respiratory problems.

**Although complications after colonoscopy are uncommon, it is important for you to recognize the early signs of any possible complications. Contact the physician who performed your procedure if you notice any of the following symptoms: severe abdominal pain, fever, chills, or rectal bleeding of more than ½ cup. If you are unable to reach your physician, go to your nearest hospital's emergency room.**

## Appointment Information

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_ AM  
PM

### Limitations of colonoscopy

At this time, colonoscopy is the “gold standard” for colon cancer screening. Every effort is made to find and remove all polyps. It is unfortunately not a perfect test. Even with the best preparation, polyps are occasionally hidden behind folds in the colon that are not detected. Thus, while the risk of developing colon cancer following a screening colonoscopy is extremely low, the risk can never be zero.

### To the patient

Because education is an important part of comprehensive medical care, you have been provided with this information to prepare you for your procedure. If you have any questions about the need for colonoscopy, alternative tests, the cost of the procedure, methods of billing, or insurance coverage, speak with your doctor or your doctor's office staff. **Endoscopists are highly trained specialists who welcome your questions regarding their credentials and training. If you have any questions that have not been answered, please discuss them with your physician prior to your examination.**

### Norwalk Hospital Outpatient Registration

**Patients coming to Norwalk Hospital for outpatient procedures can save time by pre-registering.** Call the Express Service, Monday through Friday, between 11 am and 6 pm so you may obtain the necessary information. The phone number is 203-852-2092.

## Colonoscopy Patient Information



## Department of Gastroenterology Patient Information: **Colonoscopy**

**Please read the information given below completely before the day of your procedure.** Your physician has determined that a colonoscopy is necessary for further evaluation or treatment of your medical condition. This brochure has been prepared to help you understand the procedure. It includes the answers to questions patients ask most frequently. **Please read it carefully.** If you have any questions, please discuss them with the endoscopy nurse or your physician before the examination begins. Make sure you have arranged for a ride home after your colonoscopy. **If no ride is available, the procedure will not be started.**

### What is a colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy involves the passage of a flexible, lighted instrument, with a small video camera on the tip, from the rectum to the beginning of the colon (cecum). This instrument is designed to aid in the detection of abnormalities within the lining of the colon. The instrument is approximately the diameter of your finger.

### What preparation is needed?

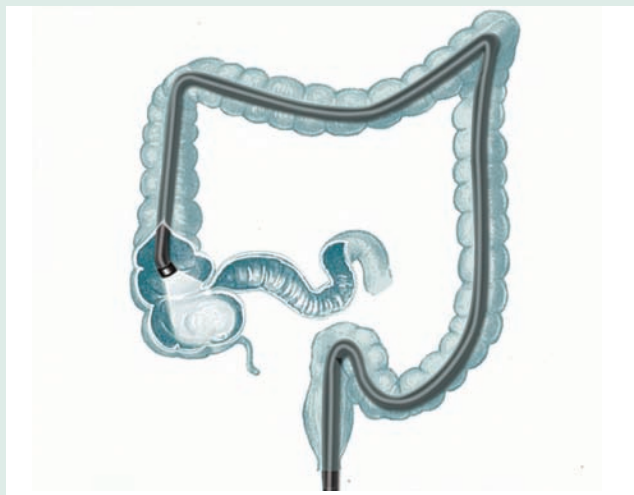
The colon must be completely clean for the procedure to be accurate and complete. **Your physician will give you detailed instructions regarding dietary restrictions to follow and the cleansing routine to use.** In general, preparation consists of either the consumption of a large volume of a special cleansing solution, or clear liquids, laxatives, and possibly enemas prior to the examination. **Follow your doctor's instructions carefully. If you do not, the procedure may have to be cancelled and repeated at a later date.**

### What about my current medications?

You may continue taking most medications as usual, but some medications can interfere with the preparation or the examination. Inform your physician about your current medications and any allergies you have to medications several days before the examination.

**Consent – You will be asked to sign a form that verifies that you have read and understand the information given to you. This will give the physician the consent to perform the procedure.**

Aspirin products, arthritis medications, anticoagulants (blood thinners) such as Coumadin®, Plavix®, Persantine®, or Ticlid®, insulin, Vitamin E, ginkgo, and iron products are examples of medications you should discuss with your physician prior to the examination. In addition, some medications for depression (MAO inhibitors) may modify your anesthesia needs. Please notify your physician if you are taking such medications. **Alert your physician if you require antibiotics prior to undergoing dental procedures and for such reasons as artificial joints, artificial heart valves, or a heart murmur.** Inform your physician about these needs at least one week prior to your procedure. It may require additional time prior to your procedure for preparation in the Endoscopy Lab.



### What can be expected during colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy is usually very well tolerated and rarely causes much discomfort. You may experience the feeling of pressure, bloating, or cramping at times during the procedure. Most patients experience no symptoms. Your doctor will give you medications through a vein to help you relax and better tolerate your procedure. You will be lying on your side or back while the colonoscope is advanced through your colon. As the colonoscope is slowly withdrawn, the lining is again examined. The procedure usually takes on average 30 minutes. In some cases, the passage of the colonoscope through the entire

colon to the cecum cannot be achieved. The physician will decide if the limited examination is sufficient or if other examinations are necessary.

### What if the colonoscopy shows something abnormal?

If your doctor thinks an area of the colon needs to be evaluated in greater detail, an instrument will be passed through the colonoscope to obtain a biopsy (a sample of the colon lining). This specimen will be submitted to the pathology laboratory for microscopic analysis. If the colonoscopy is being performed to identify sites of bleeding, the areas of bleeding may be controlled using the colonoscope by injecting certain medications, or by cautery (sealing off bleeding vessels with heat). If polyps are found, they are generally removed. This can be done with the biopsy forceps or with the use of a wire loop called a polypectomy snare. When polyps are removed with a snare, sometimes cautery (electrical current) is used. **Please inform your doctor if you have an implanted defibrillator.** You should experience no discomfort with the removal of a polyp. Remember, biopsies are taken for many reasons and do not necessarily mean that cancer is suspected.

### What are polyps, and why are they removed?

Polyps are abnormal growths originating from the lining of the colon. They can vary in size from 2 millimeters to a few centimeters. **The majority of polyps are benign (non-cancerous), but the doctor cannot always tell a benign polyp from a malignant (cancerous) polyp by its outward appearance alone.** For this reason, removed polyps are sent for tissue analysis. **Removal of polyps is an important means to prevent colon cancer.** There is a small risk that removing a polyp will result in bleeding or result in a burn to the wall of the colon, which could require emergency surgery (in less than 1% of cases).

### What happens after colonoscopy?

After your colonoscopy, your physician will explain the results to you. **Someone must drive you home from the hospital because of the medications used during your examination. Use of a taxi is not permitted. If no ride is available, the procedure cannot be started.**