



Colon & Rectal Surgery, Colonoscopy & Endoscopy

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What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test performed to examine the mucosa (inner lining) of your colon and the most distal part of the small intestine. It is performed by a specialized physician who has received additional training.

Why is a colonoscopy done?

A colonoscopy can be done as a routine screening for colon cancer and rectal cancer, to screen for disease or malignancies for which you may have a family history of, or for surveillance after previous history of colorectal cancer, polyps or inflammatory bowel disorders.

How common is colon cancer?

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. Cancer usually develops from a precancerous lesion called an adenomatous polyp or adenoma. Polyps are very common and can occur in more than 30% of the population 50 years or older.

Why is a colonoscopy important?

Colon cancer can be prevented in most individuals with appropriate screening and surveillance. The destruction of polyps is directly related to cancer prevention. Colon cancer usually has no symptoms. Colon cancer, if discovered early, can be cured in most individuals.

How is a colonoscopy done?

Preparation for your colonoscopy typically begins one day before your exam. You need to take a laxative the day prior to cleanse your colon. You will arrive at the endoscopy center, the nursing staff will admit you, check your vital signs and insert an IV. You will meet the physician performing your colonoscopy to discuss the procedure go over any questions you may have. Sedation will be administered through your IV to keep you comfortable. The lights are turned down so the physician can view your colon more easily on a magnified screen. A nurse will be by your side throughout the exam, which typically takes 15-30 minutes. Your physician will talk to you and your family once the procedure is completed to review findings. A letter will be sent to your primary doctor and you will be contact by a nurse regarding results and follow up instructions