



## Are there any complications from colonoscopy and polypectomy?

Colonoscopy and polypectomy procedures are safe and associated with very low risk when performed by physicians who have been specially trained and are experienced in such procedures.

Localized irritation of the vein may occur at the site of medication injection. A tender lump may develop and remain for several weeks to several months but will eventually go away.

Bleeding may occur from the site of a biopsy or polyp removal. It is usually minor and will stop on its own. It can be controlled by cauterization (application of electrical current) through the colonoscope. In very rare cases, transfusions or surgery may be required.

Another possible complication is perforation (a tear through the wall of the bowel) which may allow leakage of intestinal fluids. This complication usually requires surgery including a temporary colostomy; however in some cases may be managed with antibiotics and intravenous fluids.

Other possible risks include drug reactions and complications from unrelated diseases such as heart attack or stroke. Death is extremely rare but remains a remote possibility.

If you experience problems please contact the office of your physician.

## Why is a colonoscopy necessary?

Colonoscopy is a valuable tool for the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases of the large bowel. Abnormalities suspected by X-ray can be confirmed and studied in detail. The cause of symptoms such as rectal bleeding or change of bowel habits may be found by colonoscopy. It is also useful for diagnosis and follow-up of patients with inflammatory bowel disease.

Colonoscopy's greatest impact is probably in its contribution to the control of colon cancer by polyp removal. Before colonoscopy became available, major abdominal surgery was the only way to remove colonic polyps to see if they were cancerous. Most polyps can now be removed easily and safely without surgery.

Periodic colonoscopy is a valuable test for follow-up of patients with previous polyps or colon cancer, and as a screening tool for people at risk of colon cancer.

Colonoscopy is a safe and extremely worthwhile procedure which is very well-tolerated. The decision to perform this procedure was based upon assessment of your particular problem. If you have any questions about your need for colonoscopy, do not hesitate to speak to your doctor.

### Department Hours of Operation:

**BGH - Mon. to Fri. 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**PEC - Mon. to Fri. 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Quinte Health Care  
Belleville General  
265 Dundas Street E.  
Belleville, ON K8N 5A9  
T: (613) 969-7400

Quinte Health Care  
Prince Edward County Memorial  
403 Main Street E.  
Picton, ON K0K 2T0  
T: (613) 476-1008

## Colonoscopy and Polypectomy

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

On \_\_\_\_\_, please

Enter Belleville General Hospital at the Hastings Level 3 Main Entrance and report to Patient Registration at \_\_\_\_\_.

Enter Picton Memorial Hospital at the Main Entrance and report to Patient Registration at \_\_\_\_\_.

Your appointment is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_

1) ***Sedation will be used so please arrange for a family member or friend to drive you home and remain with you overnight. YOUR DRIVER MUST REMAIN IN HOSPITAL DURING YOUR STAY. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE SOMEONE TO ACCOMPANY YOU YOUR TEST WILL HAVE TO BE CANCELLED***

You may be ready for discharge 1-3 hours after arrival. ***You must not drive or operate machinery until the day after receiving sedation for your procedure.***

2) If you require assistance with personal care, please arrange for someone to be with you.

**\*Please bring a list of ALL medications\***

**\*Please do not arrive chewing gum**

**\*Please leave all jewelry and valuables at home**

**\*Please do not wear any perfumes or colognes**

## How to prepare for your procedure.

Your doctor's office has provided you with an information sheet that is specific for your doctor. Follow all the instructions for taking the bowel preparation and medication to ensure that you have prepared yourself the best that you can.

Follow medication instructions carefully as some medications need to be stopped, while others are to be continued in the days before your scheduled procedure. If you take blood thinners, be certain that you understand your doctor's orders for stopping or continuing them prior to your procedure.

**If you have a history of kidney disease or congestive heart failure, please contact your doctor for further instructions.**

**Upon receiving notification of your colonoscopy appointment please notify the doctor who will be doing your procedure if:**

- 1. You have a Pacemaker, Implanted Cardiac Defibrillator or other Implanted Electronic Devices.**
- 2. You are taking anticoagulants (blood thinners)**
- 3. You are unable to make the appointment scheduled**

Follow food and fluid intake instructions carefully as this is an important part of your procedure.

## The day of your scheduled procedure.

Please bring with you to the hospital your completed anaesthetic questionnaire, consent form and a list of all current medications.

## What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is the insertion of a long flexible tube, about the thickness of a finger. It is inserted into the rectum and into the large bowel (colon) and allows the doctor to carefully examine the lining of the colon. Abnormalities suspected by x-ray can be confirmed and studied in detail. Abnormalities which are too small to be seen on x-ray may be identified.

If the doctor feels that it is necessary, he can pass an instrument through the colonoscope and take a small piece of tissue (a biopsy) for examination in the laboratory. Biopsies are taken for many reasons and do not necessarily mean that cancer is suspected.

## What is a polypectomy?

During the colonoscopy, a polyp may be found. Polyps are abnormal growths of tissue which vary in size from a tiny dot to several inches. If your doctor feels that removal of the polyp is necessary, he will pass a wire loop (snare) through the scope and remove the polyp from the bowel wall with or without the aid of an electric current.

You should feel no pain during removal of the polyp. Polyps are usually removed because they can cause rectal bleeding or may contain cancer. Although the majority of polyps are benign (noncancerous), a small percentage may contain an area of cancer in them or may develop into cancer. Removal of colonic polyps, therefore, is an important means of prevention and cure of colon cancer.

## What should you expect during the procedure?

Your doctor or anaesthesiologist will give you medication through a vein to make you relaxed and sleepy. While you are lying in a comfortable position, the colonoscope will be inserted into the rectum and gradually advanced through the colon. The lining of the colon will be examined. The colonoscope will then slowly be withdrawn while the colon is again carefully examined. There may be some discomfort during colonoscopy, however, the procedure is usually well-tolerated. Many patients even fall asleep during the examination.

## What happens after the colonoscopy?

You will be kept in the endoscopy unit until most of the effects of the medication have worn off. You may feel bloated as a result of the introduction of air into the colon during the examination.

You will be able to resume your usual diet after the colonoscopy unless instructed otherwise. If a polyp has been removed, your doctor may wish your diet to be limited for a while before returning to your regular diet.

**Do not drink any alcohol for at least 24 hrs. after your procedure.**