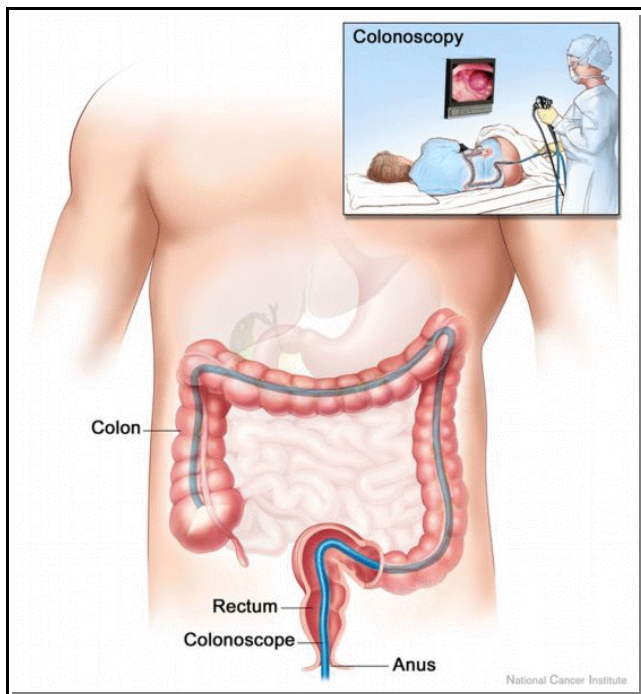


## COLONOSCOPY



The entire colon and rectum is examined.

### What is it?

- Colonoscopy is an examination of the lining of the colon and rectum; that is, the large intestine.

### Why is it done?

- Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the U. S. (and the leading cause in non-smokers).
- Most colorectal cancers start as benign growths (polyps).
- Colonoscopy is the most accurate test for detecting polyps, and the best way to remove them.
- By removing colon and rectal polyps, almost all colorectal cancer can be prevented.

### Who should have it done?

- All people, age 50 and older, male or female.
- The exam should be done at an even younger age if:
  - There is bleeding or change in bowel habits;
  - There is a family history of colorectal polyps or cancer;
  - There is personal history of inflammatory bowel disease.

### How is it Done?

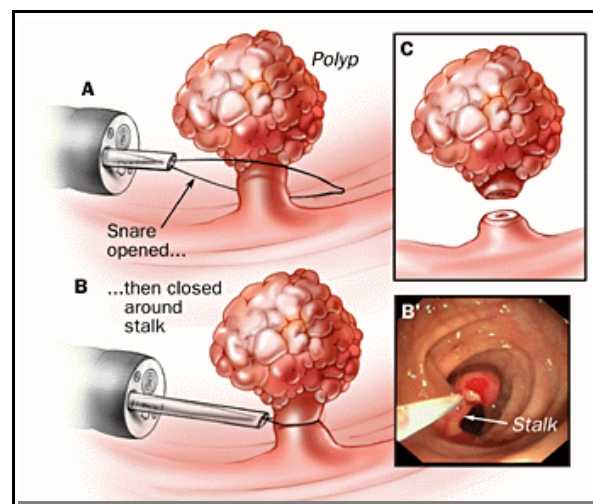
- A laxative drink is taken the evening before the test to cleanse the colon for proper visualization during the procedure.
- On the day of the test, the patient is given sedation intravenously, to induce a “twilight sleep”; most patients do not feel any discomfort and once the test is completed, do not even realize that the test has been done.
- A thin, flexible, lubricated tube (the scope) is gently inserted into the rectum and advanced slowly inside the colon.
- If any polyps are seen, the majority can be removed during the examination (see the diagram to the right).

### How long does it take?

- You are asked to report 1 hour before the procedure time.
- The procedure itself lasts 30 to 45 minutes.
- You will be monitored for about 30 minutes after the test.
- It is important to have a friend or a relative take you home.

### Will insurance cover the cost?

- Medicare recipients are covered if they have not had a colonoscopy in the past 10 years or a sigmoidoscopy in the past 4 years.
- For other insurance carriers, contact your benefits representative to determine what is covered.



### Polyp removed...Cancer prevented.

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