

## ARE THERE RISKS WITH COLONOSCOPY?

### Some people may experience:

- Reaction to the medication including rash, fever, nausea, vomiting, bloating or breathing problems.
- Redness and soreness at the IV site or rectum.
- Small amounts of blood in the stool for 1 to 2 days if the doctor took a biopsy or removed a polyp.

### Uncommon but serious side effects may include:

- Aspiration of stomach contents into the lungs due to the sedation.
- A perforation, or tear, in the colon wall, treated with antibiotics and sometimes surgery to repair the tear.
- Possibility of missing a polyp or small tumour.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- Sometimes the test cannot be completed if the bowel is not thoroughly emptied or for technical reasons. The doctor and endoscopy suite staff will advise you on the next steps.
- During the first week following the test, go to the nearest emergency department if you experience chills, fever, heavy bleeding or severe abdominal pain.

### Please note:

The information in **this handout** is only meant for the person who received it from their healthcare team. **It is not to replace any advice or instructions given by your doctor.**

If you have an appointment scheduled and need more information or wish to **reschedule**, please contact the Endoscopy Unit directly at

**902-894-0059, for Charlottetown, Queen Elizabeth Hospital**

**902-432-2541 for Summerside, Prince County Hospital**

You can also reach out to your family doctor, nurse practitioner, or general surgeon if you have any questions.

In case your colonoscopy was managed by a **Colorectal Cancer Screening Navigator**, please contact them at **1-855-733-0762**.

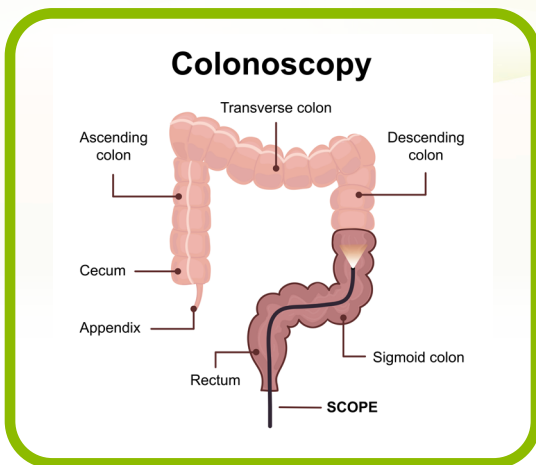


**COLONOSCOPY  
INFORMATION**

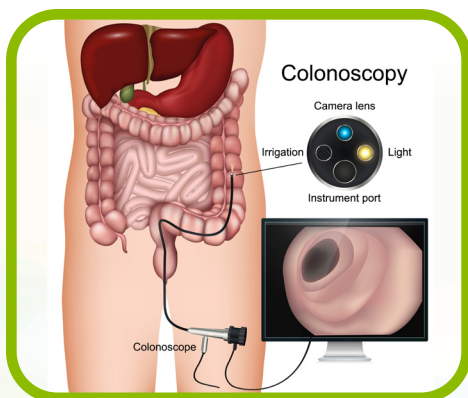
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## WHAT IS A COLONOSCOPY?

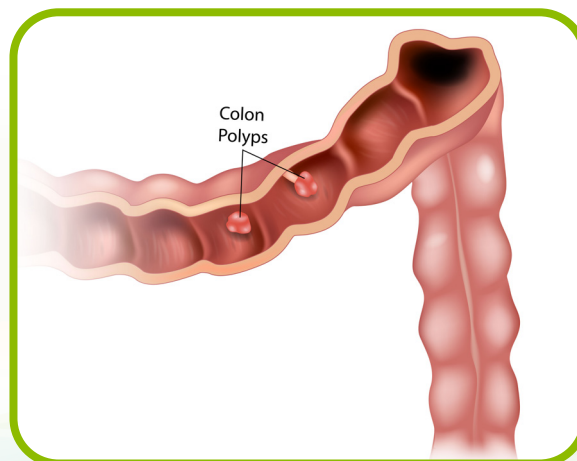


- A colonoscopy is a test that uses a colonoscope, or scope, to examine the lining of the rectum and colon. The rectum and colon make up the large intestine, also often called the bowel.
- A scope is a long flexible tube with a camera and a light at the end.



## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING A COLONOSCOPY.

- Before the test begins, a nurse will insert an intravenous (IV) line to give you medicines including sedation, pain and antibiotic as needed to ensure your comfort and safety.
- You will be lying on your side as the doctor inserts the scope into the anus, gently pushing it through the bowel.
- The test allows the doctor to examine the bowel lining to determine the cause of any bleeding, the presence of any ulcers, inflammation, polyps (small tissue growths) or cancerous growths.
- The doctor may take biopsies, small tissue samples for lab testing, or remove polyps. Most polyps are non-cancerous.



## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A COLONOSCOPY.

- After the test, it is normal to have mild abdominal cramping and passing of gas.
- If you received sedation medication for the test, you might be considered impaired for up to 24 hours.
  - You should not sign any legal documents.
  - You will not be able to drive yourself home. You will need a trusted person to meet you at the endoscopy unit to pick you up from the hospital.
  - You should not drink alcohol or take sleeping pills or anti-anxiety medications.
  - You should not be responsible for another person's care, e.g. a baby, young child, or person in poor health.
  - You can begin drinking full fluids and advance to a regular diet as tolerated.
- If you take blood-thinning medication, discuss when to restart these medications with the doctor. Resume all other medications as usual unless told otherwise.