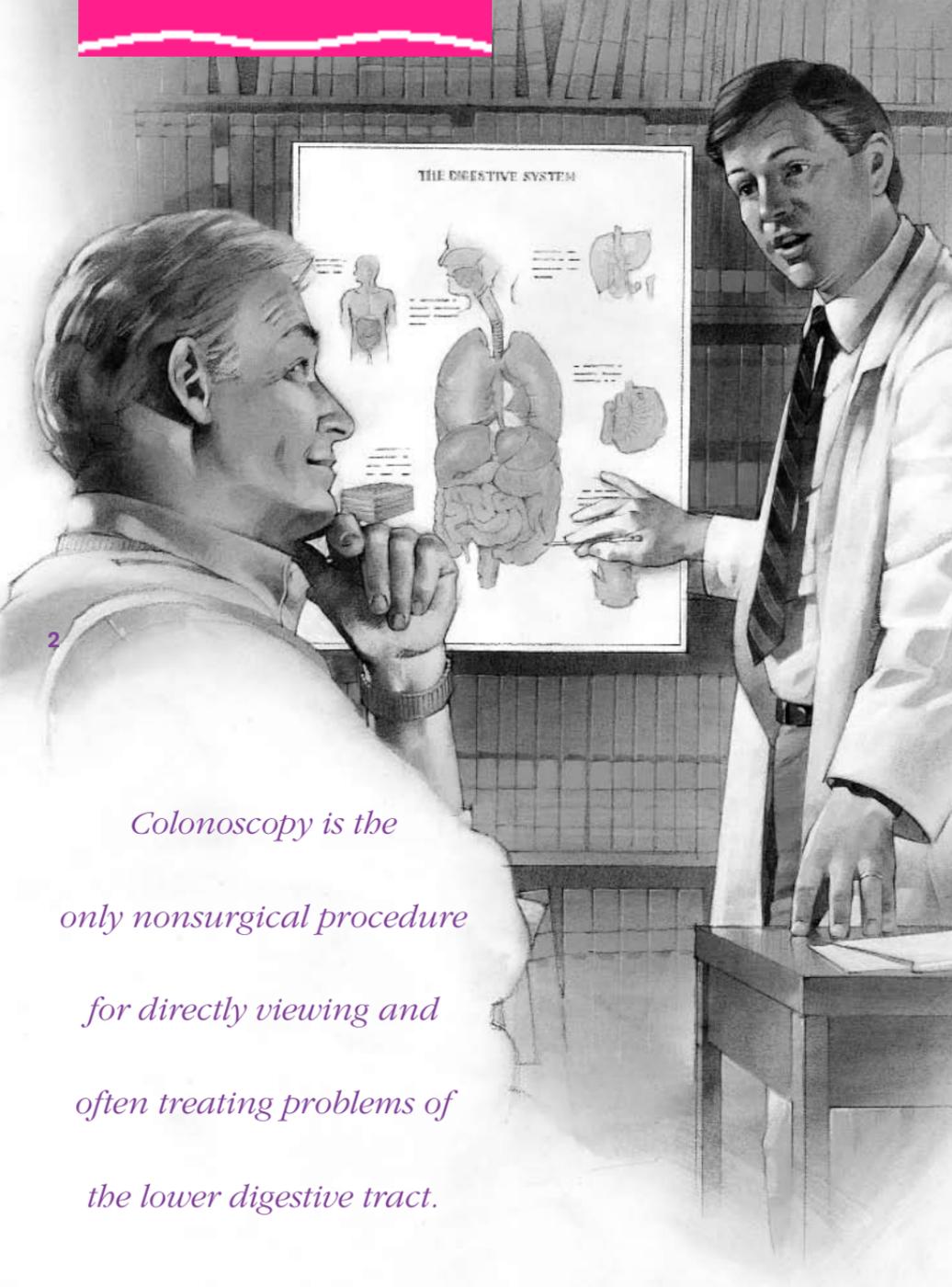


Colonoscopy

Diagnosing Digestive Problems





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Colonoscopy is the only nonsurgical procedure for directly viewing and often treating problems of the lower digestive tract.

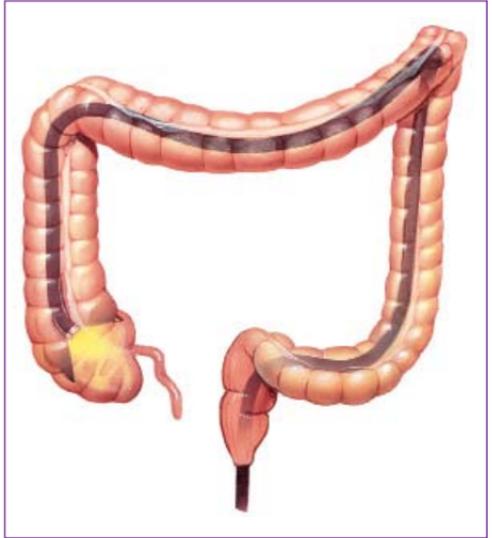
DIAGNOSING WITHOUT SURGERY

Your doctor has advised you to have a **colonoscopy**. This is a nonsurgical procedure that can help your doctor diagnose digestive problems. This routine exam allows your doctor to see directly inside your lower digestive tract (colon and rectum). Colonoscopy is commonly used to screen for cancer and to view the lining of the colon. The results of your colonoscopy help your doctor find out if you have a digestive problem. And, if you do, your doctor can then plan the best treatment.

THROUGH THE COLONOSCOPE

Your doctor checks the lining of your colon by using a colonoscope. This instrument is a thin, flexible tube that is moved through your colon. The tube has several openings through which instruments can be passed.

- 4 Threadlike fibers of glass within the tube beam light inside your colon. A computer chip at the tip of the colonoscope picks up the image of your colon and sends it to a TV screen. This allows your doctor to view an enlarged picture of your colon.



A colonoscope allows your doctor to view the entire length of your colon and rectum.



Light illuminates the colon's lining. Openings in the thin tube allow instruments to be passed through for removing growths or taking tissue samples.



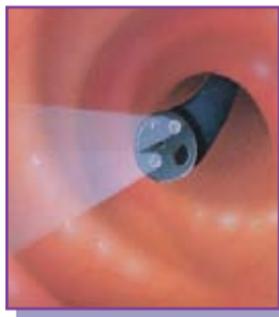
VIEWING YOUR PROBLEM

Your colon and rectum normally have a smooth lining. If your doctor sees polyps or other growths during your colonoscopy, they can often be removed then. Or your doctor may take a **biopsy** (tissue sample) of a growth to study the tissue further. Colonoscopy helps your doctor to diagnose other abnormalities, such as bleeding or an area of inflammation, and to prescribe the best treatment for them.

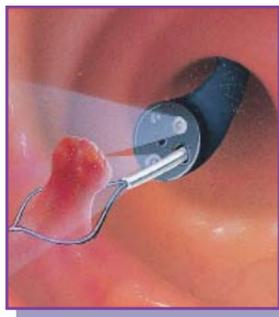
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Colonoscopy can detect problems in their earliest, most treatable stages.

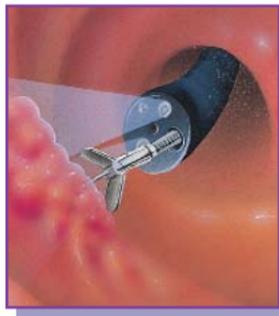
A normal colon has a smooth lining without abnormalities.

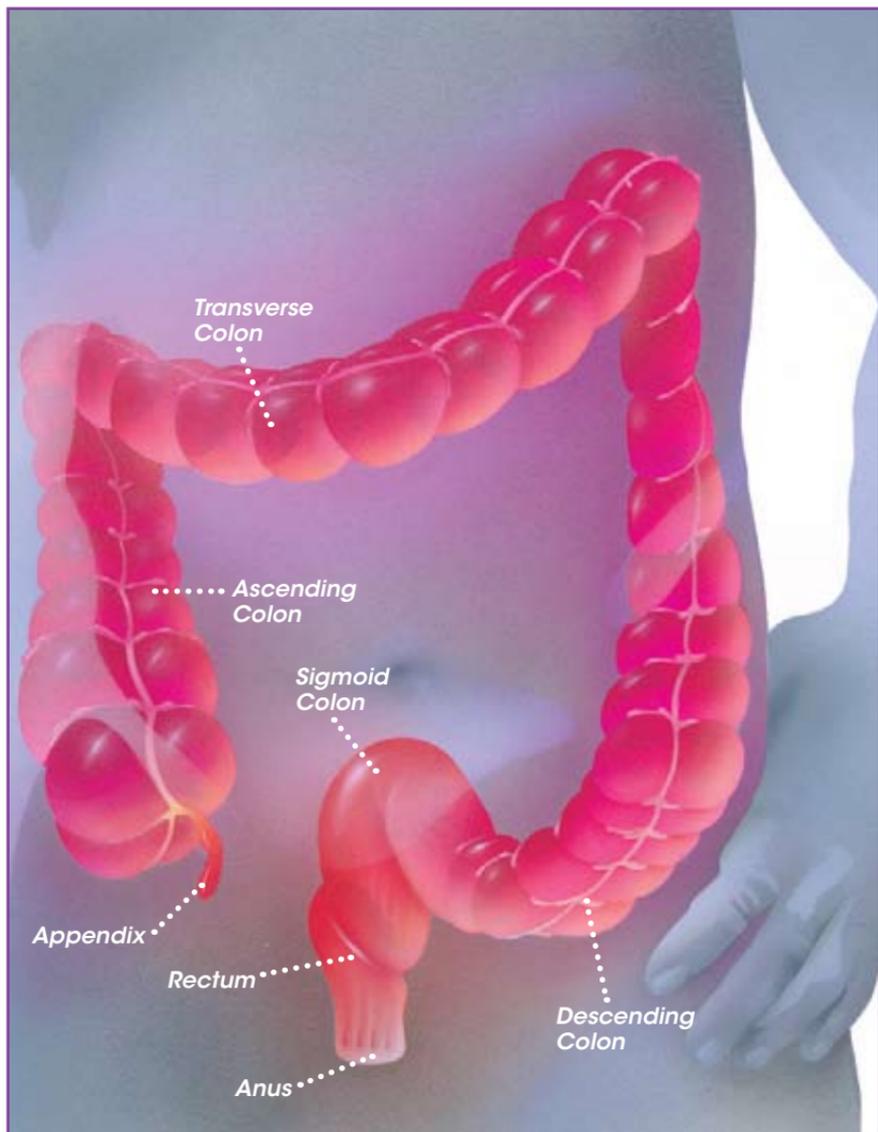


Polyps can be removed with a special instrument.



Growths may be biopsied for further study and treatment.





PREPARING FOR COLONOSCOPY

Your doctor will inform you about how to prepare during the few days before your colonoscopy. You'll be asked to follow a special diet and to take other steps to ensure that your colon is empty and can be viewed clearly. Because you will be sedated during colonoscopy and you're likely to feel sleepy afterward, you'll need to arrange in advance for someone to take you home following the exam.



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You can help

make your

exam a success

by following a

few simple steps

before the

procedure.

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REMINDERS

Don't eat solid foods for one to two days before the exam. Drink only clear liquids like water or broth, as directed by your doctor.

Use a laxative or other preparation before the exam, following your doctor's instructions.

Don't try to drive yourself home. If you haven't arranged for transportation, your procedure might be canceled.

Tell Your Doctor If:

- *You know you're allergic to certain medications.*
- *You know you take medications such as aspirin that can thin the blood.*
- *You have heart or lung problems.*
- *You're being treated for a medical condition.*

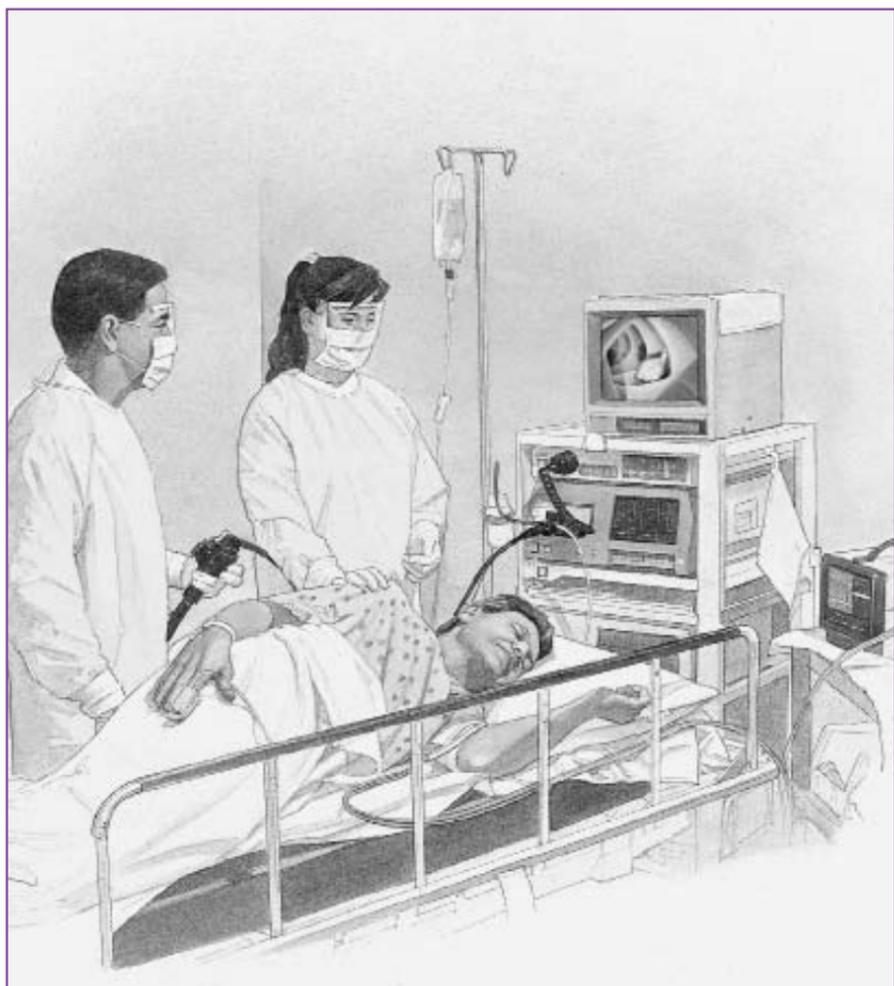
DURING COLONOSCOPY

During your procedure, the lubricated colonoscope tube is inserted slowly and gently into the rectum. Because your doctor needs a clear view, air is used to expand your colon. As a result, you may feel some pressure and cramping.

10 Depending on what the colonoscopy reveals, your doctor may take a biopsy. If a polyp is found, it will be removed at that time. When the exam is over, usually within an hour, you'll be taken to the recovery area.



Check with your doctor or facility to find out what time you should arrive to register.



You will be lightly sedated during the procedure.



Most people recover quickly and leave shortly after the exam. They can return to their usual routines, including driving and working, the day after colonoscopy.

AFTER COLONOSCOPY

While recovering, you'll be monitored for about 30–45 minutes until you're ready to go home. Within a few hours after you return home, you'll be able to eat normally and resume some of your usual activities, unless otherwise directed. It's normal to experience some gas pains caused by the use of air during colonoscopy. Try taking a walk to help relieve the bloated feeling.

Call your doctor if you have abdominal pain, high fever, or bleeding.





YOUR RESULTS

Your doctor will tell you the results of your colonoscopy either before you leave for home, or within a few days after the procedure. If your problem was treated during the exam, your doctor may give you special instructions to follow. If a biopsy was performed, allow several days for the results. If necessary, further studies or treatments may be recommended.



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