

**National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
Media Outreach**

**KEY MESSAGES ABOUT COLORECTAL SCREENING BY COLONOSCOPY
Clean Colon....Careful...Comfortable...Relaxed...Simple...Safe**

What to Expect From a Colonoscopy from the American College of Gastroenterology

What is Colonoscopy?

- Colonoscopy is the **careful** examination of the large intestine using a lighted, flexible fiber optic instrument called a colonoscope.
- The procedure allows a gastroenterologist – a **well-trained specialist** - to look inside the entire colon to check for abnormal or inflamed tissue.
- Colonoscopy has also emerged over the last two decades as the preferred method to screen people for abnormal precancerous growths called polyps or colon cancer.
- Colonoscopy is among the most powerful tools in use in clinical medicine, because of its extraordinary potential to both identify and permit removal of colorectal polyps **before** they turn into cancer.

Bowel Prep: A Clean Colon Results in the Best Test

- Before a colonoscopy, the colon must be completely clean for the test results to be accurate.
- **The cleanest colon gives the best results...**adequate cleansing is absolutely necessary for a safe and reliable colonoscopy.
- Many patients claim the prep is the toughest part of the exam, but a good prep is essential, so it is vitally important to follow your doctor's orders exactly.

You Will Be Comfortable

- Many people avoid getting a colonoscopy because they are anxious about the possible discomfort that they may experience during the test.
- Because they are sedated during the procedure, many people do not even remember the experience.

You Will Be Treated Carefully & Gently

- The doctor then slowly inserts a thin flexible lighted tube called a colonoscope into the rectum and maneuvers it gently through the inside of the entire colon.

- The scope transmits an image of the colon onto a video screen so the doctor can check for any abnormalities. If any pre-cancerous polyps are found, they are removed during the examination through tools that the doctor can pass through the colonoscope, thus preventing the development of colon cancer in a single procedure.

You Will Be Relaxed

- The entire process of undergoing a colonoscopy is very **simple**.
- After having completed the bowel cleansing as directed by your physician, you'll report to the doctor's office and get an IV placed into a vein so that you can get medicines and fluids.
- Before the actual colonoscopy begins, you will be given a mild sedative for relaxation and to prevent discomfort.

Colonoscopy is Simple

- The colonoscopy procedure itself typically takes about 15 to 30 minutes and you should expect to be at your doctor's office for about 2 to 3 hours on the day of your colonoscopy.

Colonoscopy is Safe

- Colonoscopy is a safe procedure. Potential complications are rare but can occur. Your doctor will review these possible problems. You will have the chance to ask questions if you have concerns.