

COLONOSCOPIES CAN SAVE LIVES

Although 50,000 Americans die of cancer each year, one-third of adults do not have a colonoscopy as recommended. This life-saving procedure can detect cancer in its early stages. A colonoscopy is a quick outpatient procedure used to examine a patient's colon and rectum for cancer and polyps.

The following guide provides information needed to understand the techniques used when undergoing a colonoscopy, reasons to have a colonoscopy and ways you can prepare for the procedure.

01 | Procedure Techniques

A colonoscopy screening is given as a precautionary measure in early cancer detection. However, if you are experiencing one of following unexplained symptoms, contact your medical provider:

- Abdominal pain
- Rectal bleeding
- Chronic Bloating
- Weight loss

Cancer screening can be completed by one of several methods depending on areas of concern. The most basic screening method is a Colonoscopy. Other techniques used in early cancer detection are:

- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy – focuses on the lower area of the colon.
- Virtual Colonoscopy – examination of x-rays, 2 and 3D images of the colon and rectal areas.
- Double-Contrast Barium Enema (DCBE) – in order to view polyps, air and barium are pumped into the rectal area.

02 | Reasons to Schedule an Appointment

Scheduling an appointment for a colonoscopy doesn't have to be embarrassing. By taking the first step, you could save your life. Here are several reasons to schedule your appointment:

- The procedure is painless and it is often performed while you are sedated.
- Early detection saves lives by identifying cancer and polyps in early stages.
- The procedure is quick, it and only takes about 30-50 minutes with a 1-2 hour recovery time.
- No need to complete another test for 5-10 years.

03 | Ways to Prepare

Once you are scheduled for a colonoscopy, the following tips can be implemented to ensure a stress-free process:

- Sustain a liquid diet 24-72 hours prior, in addition to water; you may be also be able to consume light colored gelatin and popsicles.
- A laxative may be prescribed to support cleaning out the colon.
- Having a designated individual to drive you home after the procedure is recommended.

Please seek the guidance of the medical professional conducting the procedure for additional insight on preparation and methods for the scheduled procedure.

For more information on colonoscopies, visit:

<http://www.ccalliance.org/screening/methods.html>

Did You Know? A Colonoscopy should be scheduled every 5 years starting at age 50

References

<http://www.coloncancerfoundation.org/screening/colonoscopy.html?qclid=CL3e7dmRrsYCFdcYgQodyyEAHw>

<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-topics/diagnostic-tests/colonoscopy/Pages/diagnostic-test.aspx>

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<https://www.floridahospital.com/blog/5-reasons-why-you-should-get-colonoscopy>