

Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is the most accurate method currently available for examining the inside of the rectum, colon (large bowel), and the lower end of the ileum (small bowel).

For this procedure, we first administer a sedative to relax you and allow you to sleep through the procedure. We then gently insert a flexible tube with a tiny video camera on the end (colonoscope) into the rectum and up through the colon. The colonoscope allows us to examine the entire area where colorectal cancer can occur, from the end of the rectum to the beginning of the colon.

We can easily guide the colonoscope, take tissue samples, and even remove small tumors and polyps-painlessly. The procedure generally takes half an hour but you should allow one to two hours as a recovery period before going home. You will need someone to drive you home.

A colonoscopy is the best, most effective tool available for detecting colorectal cancer. In patients with no gastrointestinal symptoms and no risk factors for colon cancer, the American Cancer Society recommends a first screening colonoscopy at age 50, at age 45 for African Americans. Colonoscopy is also used to diagnose and evaluate inflammatory diseases of the colon such as Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis.