Colonoscopy

E03 Lite - Expires end of January 2027

This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

© EIDO Systems International Limited. The operation and treatment information in this document is published under license from EIDO Systems International and is protected by copyright laws. Other than for your personal, non-commercial use, you may not copy, print out, download or otherwise reproduce any of the information.

eidohealthcare.com

Trusted Information Creator

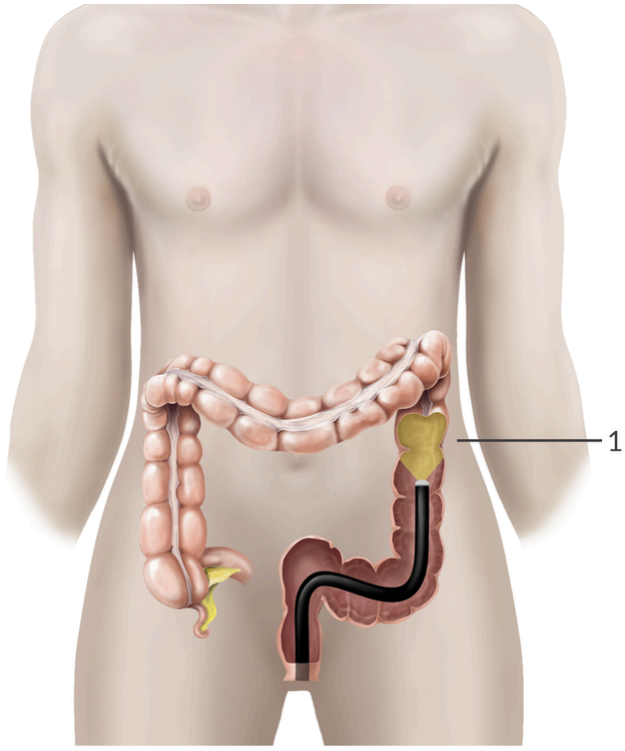
Patient Information Forum

EIDO HEALTHCARE

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a procedure to look at the inside of your large bowel (colon) using a flexible endoscope (camera).

A colonoscopy



© EIDO Systems International Illustrator: www.medical-artist.com

1. Large bowel

What are the benefits?

A colonoscopy is performed so that your healthcare team can find out why you are experiencing particular symptoms. The results will help them decide what treatment you may need.

Another reason for a colonoscopy may be that you or members of your family have a history of inflammatory bowel diseases (ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease), bowel cancer or polyps.

Are there any alternatives?

Other options include a CT colonography (a CT scan of your large bowel). If your doctor finds the cause of your symptoms, you may still need a colonoscopy to treat it or perform biopsies.

Another option may be a capsule endoscopy. This involves swallowing a tiny camera inside a pill that takes photographs of your large bowel.

What will happen if I decide not to have the procedure or the procedure is delayed?

Your healthcare team may not be able to confirm what is causing your symptoms, and they may get worse. If they do, you should speak to your healthcare team.

If you decide not to have a colonoscopy, you should discuss this carefully with your healthcare team.

What does the procedure involve?

A colonoscopy usually takes 30 to 45 minutes.

Your endoscopist will put a gloved and lubricated finger into your back passage to check for any problems. They will then place a flexible endoscope into your back passage.

The endoscopist will be able to look for what is causing your symptoms. They may also be able to remove polyps.

What complications can happen?

The healthcare team are trained to reduce the risk of complications.

Any risk rates given are taken from studies of people who have had this procedure. Your healthcare team may be able to tell you if the risk of a complication is higher or lower for you.

Possible complications of this procedure are shown below from most to least likely. Some can be serious.

Complications of a colonoscopy

- Incomplete procedure caused by a technical difficulty, blockage in your large bowel, complications during the procedure, poor view of your large bowel or discomfort. Sometimes is it not possible to complete the procedure.
- Breathing difficulties or heart irregularities.
- Blurred vision if you are given a Buscopan injection. This usually gets better after about an hour.
- Allergic reaction to the equipment or medication.
- Infection.
- Missed diagnosis.

© EIDO Systems International Ltd.

- Heavy bleeding if a polyp is removed. Bleeding usually stops soon after a polyp is removed. Sometimes bleeding can happen up to 2 weeks after the procedure.
- Making a hole in your large bowel. This is a serious complication.
- Bleeding from a biopsy site or from minor damage caused by the endoscope. This usually stops on its own.
- Rarely, a heart attack or stroke.
- Death. This is rare.

What happens after the procedure?

If you were not given a sedative, you should be able to go home after a member of the healthcare team has spoken to you and decided you are ready. If you were given a sedative, you will usually recover in about 1 hour.

The healthcare team will tell you the results of the procedure and talk to you about any treatment or follow-up care you may need.

You should be able to return to work the next day unless you are told otherwise.

Summary

A colonoscopy is usually a safe and effective way of finding out if there is a problem with your large bowel.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

Reviewers

Jonathan Lund (DM, FRCS)

National Endoscopy Programme, Wales

Illustrator

Medical Illustration Copyright © Medical-Artist.com

© EIDO Systems International Ltd.