

Colonoscopy Information

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is the examination of your large intestine or colon. It is performed by passing a flexible fiber optic tube into the rectum, through the large intestine into the ileocecal valve, or where the large intestine connects to the small intestine.

This procedure allows your physician to examine the lining of your colon. Your physician will look for abnormalities such as bleeding, polyps, inflammation and tumors during the procedure. The physician will be able to take biopsies (small tissue samples), remove polyps (small growths), cauterize areas of bleeding (seal the tissue using electricity) and take photographs through the colonoscope.

For the best possible examination, your colon must be completely empty of waste materials. Your physician will choose a laxative that is best suited for you. It is important to follow the laxative instructions completely. Your stools should be clear or a yellow liquid. If your colon is not empty, you may be asked to reschedule the procedure.

Upon arrival, a nurse will obtain a brief history and check your vital signs. You will be asked to sign a consent form authorizing your physician to perform the colonoscopy. An intravenous needle (IV) will be placed before the procedure begins.

For the duration of the exam, you will be in the endoscopy suite. A nurse will monitor your heart, blood pressure and oxygen level throughout the procedure. You will be asked to lie on your left side. You will be given medication through the IV that will make you sleepy and relaxed. You may be given oxygen throughout the procedure to help with breathing due to the sedatives.

The physician will examine your rectum with a lubricated finger and then insert the lubricated colonoscope to begin the procedure.

Location: Digestive Health Center
1015 S. Hackett Rd., Waterloo, IA 50701

If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office at 319-234-5990. Office hours are Monday–Friday from 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., with phones answered 24 hours per day for emergencies.

As the colonoscope passes carefully through the colon, air will be released to allow your physician to see the lining. You may feel the nurse put gentle pressure on your abdomen to assist the passage of the colonoscope. This may cause some cramping or gas pains. Additional medication may be given during the procedure as needed. The physician will carefully examine the colon as the scope is being removed. There is usually little discomfort during removal.

Biopsies, polyp removal or electrocautery may be performed during the procedure. You will not be able to feel this being done. The exam usually takes around 30 minutes.

Oftentimes, participants will sleep either partially or entirely through the procedure due to the sedatives. After the procedure you will be taken to the recovery area. You may feel drowsy or sleep for a short period of time while in recovery. You may feel bloated or crampy due to the air used during the procedure. It is important to release the air prior to leaving the recovery area. A nurse will keep an eye on you, give you something to drink and monitor your blood pressure.

You must bring someone to drive you home or your procedure may be rescheduled. Before you leave, your physician will discuss the findings with you and/or your driver. Please ask a friend or family member to remain available to speak with your physician and assist you to their vehicle.

