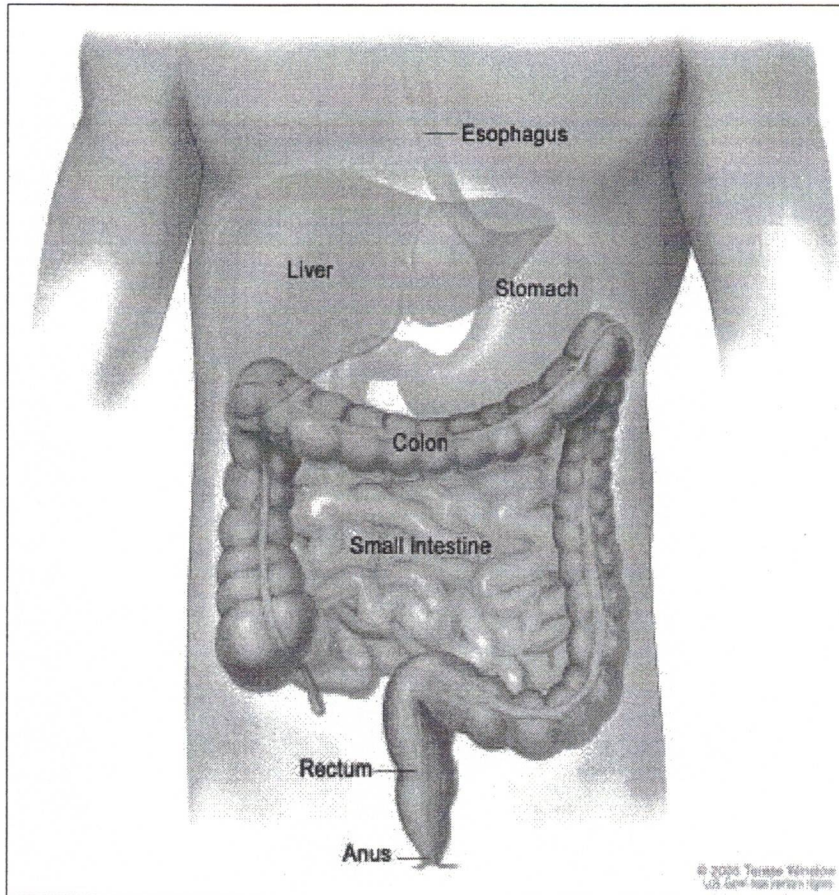


COLONOSCOPY



Diagnosing Problems of the Lower Digestive Tract

Diagnosing Without Surgery

Your doctor has advised you to have a **colonoscopy**, a non-surgical procedure that can help your doctor diagnose your digestive problem. This routine exam allows your doctor to see directly inside your lower digestive tract (colon and rectum). Based on the results of your colonoscopy, your doctor can determine the best course of action for treating or managing the cause of your problem.

Reason's For Colonoscopy

- A major, consistent shift in bowel habits, such as constipation, diarrhea, changes in stool size or shape, and a lot more or fewer bowel movements than normal for you.
- Bleeding during bowel movements.
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Persistent abdominal pain.
- A family history of colorectal cancer.
- An age of 50 or older.

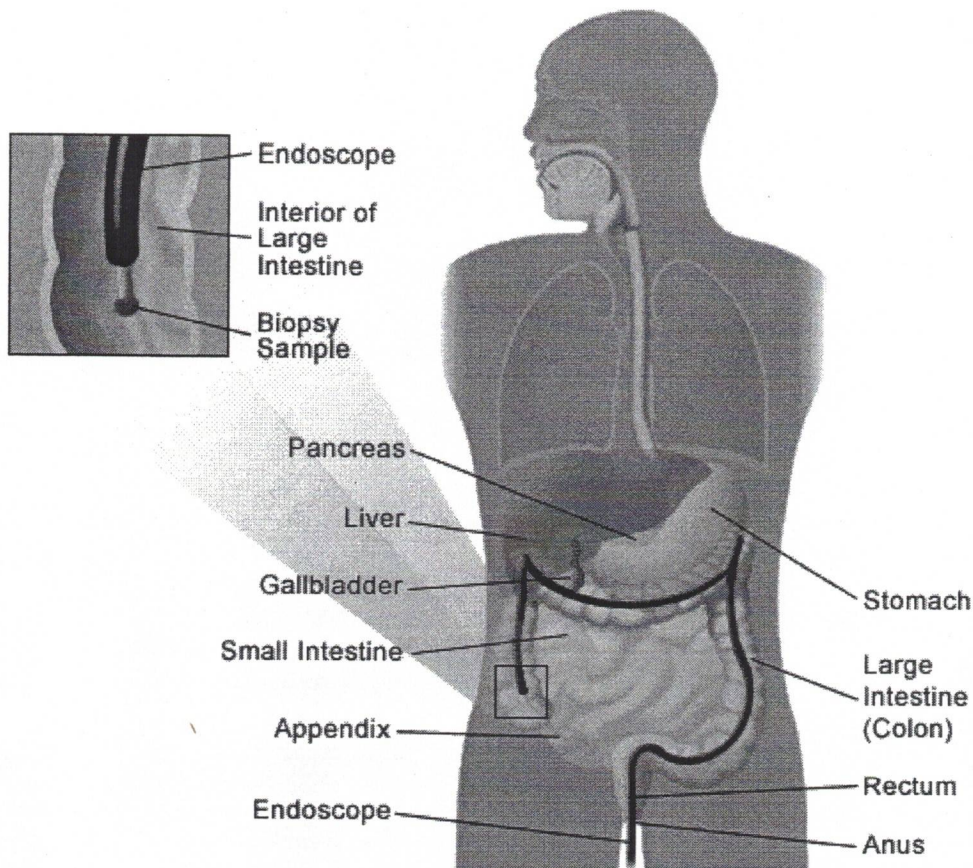
Preparing For Colonoscopy

Your doctor will inform you how to prepare during the few days before your colonoscopy. You'll be asked to follow a special diet and to take other steps to ensure that your colon is empty and can be viewed clearly. Because you will be sedated during the colonoscopy, you're likely to feel sleep afterward. Please arrange in advance for someone to be with you and to drive you home following the exam.

Your Colonoscopy

Your doctor examines the lining of your colon by looking through a lighted, flexible **endoscope**. The endoscope is about the diameter of an index finger and is used to examine the rectum and colon which is viewed on a video monitor. This endoscope has several openings through which instruments can be passed. A camera can be attached to the eyepiece to take pictures for further study. If your doctor sees polyps or other growths during your colonoscopy, they can often be removed and the tissue sample will be sent for further testing. The test results are then sent to your doctor to review within a few days.

Endoscopic Procedure



After Colonoscopy

While recovering, you'll be monitored for about 30-45 minutes until you're ready to go home. Within a few hours after you return home, you'll be able to eat normally and resume some of your usual activities, unless otherwise directed. It's normal to experience some gas pains caused by the use of air during the colonoscopy. Try walking to help relieve the bloated feeling.

Call your doctor if you have abdominal pain, high fever, or bleeding!

Your Results

Your doctor will tell you the results of your colonoscopy either before you leave for home, or within a few days after the procedure. If your problem was treated during the exam, your doctor may give you special instructions to follow. If a biopsy was performed, allow several days for the results. If necessary, further studies or treatments may be recommended.