

E03lite Colonoscopy

This document will give you information about a colonoscopy. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a procedure to look at the inside of the large bowel (colon) using a flexible telescope (see figure 1).

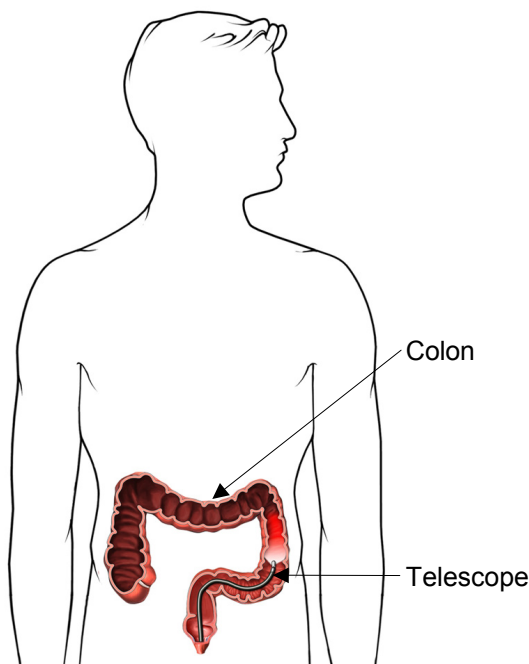


Figure 1
Colonoscopy

Sometimes a polyp (small growth) is the cause of the problem and the endoscopist may be able to remove it during the procedure.

Are there any alternatives to a colonoscopy?

Other options include a barium enema (an x-ray test of the large bowel) or a CT colography (a special scan of the large bowel).

What does the procedure involve?

If appropriate, the endoscopist may offer you a sedative or painkiller.

A colonoscopy usually takes between half an hour and three-quarters of an hour. The procedure involves placing a flexible telescope into the back passage and blowing some air into the large bowel to get a clear view. The endoscopist will be able to look for problems such as inflammation or polyps. They will be able to perform biopsies and take photographs to help make the diagnosis.

What complications can happen?

- Allergic reaction
- Breathing difficulties or heart irregularities
- Making a hole in the colon
- Bleeding
- Incomplete procedure

How soon will I recover?

If you were given a sedative, you will normally recover in about two hours. You may feel a bit bloated for a few hours but this will pass.

A member of the team will tell you what was found during the colonoscopy and will discuss with you any treatment or follow-up you need.

You should be able to go back to work the day after the colonoscopy.

Summary

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

Further information

- NHS smoking helpline on 0800 022 4332 and at www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- www.eatwell.gov.uk – for advice on maintaining a healthy weight
- www.eidoactive.co.uk – for information on how exercise can help you
- www.aboutmyhealth.org – for support and information you can trust
- British Society of Gastroenterology at www.bsg.org.uk
- Digestive Disorders Foundation at www.digestivedisorders.org.uk
- NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 (0845 606 46 47 – textphone)

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