

COLONOSCOPY

SCREENING FOR COLORECTAL CANCER | FAQ | GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Is it time for my colonoscopy?

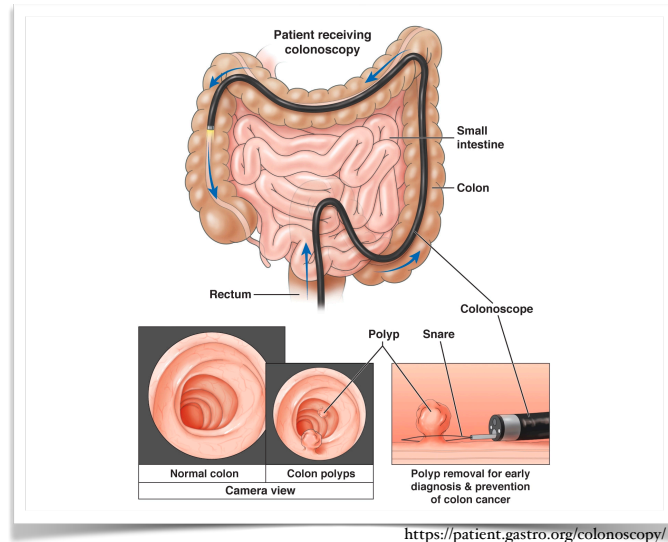
Colorectal cancer screening starts at age 45 for average-risk individuals. Those with higher-than-average risk may start screening at 40, sometimes even earlier. Dr Alexis or your PCP can help determine when screening should start and when subsequent screening colonoscopies should occur.

Does it hurt?

The colonoscopy itself is not painful. We perform the procedure with the patient sedated and under the care of an anesthesiologist.

What are the risks?

Bleeding, injury to the colon or other intra-abdominal organs, missed lesions or incomplete examination, risks of anesthesia. The chances of these types of complications are all very, very low. The benefit of a colonoscopy far outweighs the risks.



What is a colonoscopy?

This is a procedure in which a long thin flexible camera is used to look into the colon. The procedure is the “gold standard” for colorectal cancer screening and is more effective than FIT kits or other stool based screenings at detecting cancer or precancerous conditions in the colon. Colonoscopy also allows the surgeon to remove potentially precancerous growths, called *polyps*, from the colon — this can prevent the development of colon cancer.

Where exactly is my colon?

Your colon is about five feet long and is the last part of your digestive tract, starting in your right lower abdomen and ending at the anus. It absorbs water and minerals from digested food. The last part of the colon is called the rectum, and it stores solid waste until you find an acceptable place to defecate.

What is a colorectal cancer, CRC?

CRC, or cancer of the colon/rectum, develops from growths on

My Colonoscopy Checklist:

- ✦ A ride home with a responsible adult
- ✦ My bowel prep ingredients and extra clear liquids. (See [BOWEL PREP INSTRUCTIONS](#))
- ✦ COVID test: Negative PCR test required 24-48 hours prior to procedure. Please contact 707-935-5045 for more info on pre-procedure COVID testing at Sonoma valley Hospital.
- ✦ No other appointments or engagements on the day of the colonoscopy
- ✦ Oral anticoagulants: Warfarin/ coumadin, Eliquis, or Pradaxa; These may need to be held in advance of the procedure. You will be instructed when to stop taking these medications.
- ✦ Anti-platelet medications: Plavix, Brilinta, Effient; Dr Alexis will give you instructions on whether these agents need to be held and for how long.
- ✦ Diabetes medications: The prep instructions include reminders on which medications to hold.



the lining of the colon that have become cancerous, a.k.a. malignant. It is the third most common cancer and second-leading cause of cancer deaths in the US. Luckily, CRC is preventable: by finding and removing polyps before they have become malignant.

What are risk factors for developing colorectal cancer?

The most common risk factors include: a family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps (first degree relatives), a personal history of colorectal polyps or cancer, genetic predisposition to polyps or cancer, like Lynch Syndrome or Familial Adenomatous Polyposis, and Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis.

Ok, I'm ready for my scope...how do I prepare?

You will be given a procedure date at Sonoma Valley Hospital (SVH). Your actual procedure time is not finalized until a few days before the colonoscopy. Dr Alexis' office staff and/or the Perioperative Nurse Navigator at SVH will notify you of your hospital *arrival time*. Use this arrival time to plan out your bowel prep.

What should I expect with the bowel prep?

To be fair, the bowel prep is the worst part of a colonoscopy. But, it is critical to our success! The bowel prep "ingredients" are all available over-the-counter at any local pharmacy. The prep instructions are like a recipe: follow it step by step and you should have good results.

What can I expect on my scope day?

After registering at SVH, you will come up to the second floor to the Surgical Care Unit where a nurse will prepare you. Dr Alexis will meet you, check your medical history, and make sure all of your questions are answered. You will meet your anesthesiologist, too. When it is time to start, your nurse will take you to the procedure room. The team will do a final safety check. You'll soon be drifting off to sleep. The procedure takes about 20-30 minutes. You will wake up in the recovery area. When you're ready to go home, your nurse will notify your designated driver. You will have some preliminary reports from the doctor and instructions for follow up, including when you should have your next colonoscopy.