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Colonoscopy

After careful medical assessment, your doctor has recommended that you have a colonoscopy. During colonoscopy, a flexible fiber optic tube (colonoscope) is passed through the rectum into the lower intestinal tract. This procedure allows the doctor to examine the lining of the rectum and large intestine (colon) and to identify any abnormalities.

You will be given an instruction sheet explaining the preparation for this procedure, as it is important that the colon be cleaned out completely prior to the procedure. Please keep this instruction sheet handy so that you can review it the week before your procedure is scheduled. You may be asked to stop taking certain medications for several days prior to your procedure.

On arrival, the day of your procedure, you will be asked to undress and will be given a patient gown. The nursing staff will admit you by reviewing your medical and surgical history, as well as checking your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and breathing status).

You will be asked to sign consent form authorizing the doctor to perform the procedure.

A needle for intravenous (IV) medicines will be placed in your arm vein before the procedure. The anesthesiologist will meet you and review your medical and previous anesthesia history, as well. Medicine will be injected through the IV, by the anesthesiologist that will make you relax and fall asleep during the procedure. Please let the doctor and the nursing staff know if you are allergic to any medications.

During the procedure your heart, blood pressure, and breathing will be continuously monitored. As you lie on your left side, your doctor will examine your rectum with a gloved lubricated finger. Then he/she will insert the lubricated flexible colonoscope. As the colonoscope is carefully advanced through the colon, the doctor will examine the bowel lining thoroughly. You should not experience any discomfort during the procedure because of the sedation you will be given. Your position may be changed during the procedure to assist in passage of the colonoscope.

Often, a biopsy specimen (tiny piece of tissue) is taken for microscopic examination. If you have a polyp, it may be removed by electro cautery through the colonoscope. You will not feel any sensation or discomfort when the biopsy is performed or the polyp is removed. Any specimens will be sent to a laboratory specified by your insurance.

Most people do not recall any of the procedure because of the effect of the medicine. After your procedure, you will probably feel drowsy and may sleep for a short time. You may feel some bloating from air inserted during the procedure. You will be instructed by the nurses to try to expel this air, as you will be more comfortable.

As long as there are no contraindications, you will be given a light snack and drink prior to your discharge.

The doctor will discuss the findings with you and the nursing staff will give you written instructions to follow when you go home. If you have any questions please feel free to ask the doctor or the nurses.