

## Colonoscopy Information and Instructions

Your procedure is scheduled on \_\_\_\_\_ and will be performed at the following location:

- \_\_\_ DHS Endoscopy Center, 2025 Frontis Plaza, Suite 210, Winston Salem, NC 27103
- \_\_\_ DHS Office Endoscopy, 1301 National Highway, Thomasville, NC 27360
- \_\_\_ DHS Office Endoscopy, 280 Broad Street, Suite F, Kernersville, NC 27284
- \_\_\_ DHS Office Endoscopy, 112 East Kinderton Way, Suite 100, Advance, NC 27006
- \_\_\_ Forsyth Medical Center, Endoscopy Center, 3333 Silas Creek Pkwy, Winston Salem 27103
- \_\_\_ Thomasville Medical Center, 207 Old Lexington Road, Thomasville, NC 27360
- \_\_\_ J.R. Jones Medical Center, 402 West King St., King, NC 27021
- \_\_\_ Kernersville Medical Center, 1750 Kernersville Medical Parkway, Kernersville, NC 27284

with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Please arrive at \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM.

### Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is a procedure that enables your physician to conduct a visual examination of the colon (large intestine) with a small lighted flexible scope called a colonoscope that can be controlled to direct its safe passage through the colon.

The procedure enables an accurate and safe direct inspection of the inner lining of the colon. A channel through the middle of the scope permits insertion of other instruments to enhance the capabilities of the colonoscopy. Commonly, a biopsy may be taken by passing a biopsy forceps onto a particular area of the colon that is being examined. With a small pinch, tissue is removed with this device. This tissue is then sent to the pathology lab for microscopic examination by a physician that specializes in pathology. The result of these biopsies are then reported to the physician performing your procedure who will in turn report the results to you the patient, generally 10 to 14 days after the colonoscopy procedure. Material (for example, a stool specimen) can be collected from the inside of the colon for examination for infections or parasites, when appropriate. A common finding during a colonoscopy is a polyp, which is a growth within the colon that can be a precursor to colon cancer. When polyps are detected at the time of colonoscopy, they can often be removed by passing a wire snare through the channel of the colonoscope and grasping the base of the polyp where it attaches to the colon wall. An electrical current is then applied to simultaneously cut the polyp free and to cauterize the site to minimize the risk of bleeding. The polyp tissue is then removed and sent to the pathology lab for microscopic examination. If you would like additional information on colon polyps and cancer, we have additional educational brochures and articles in our office or you can review information on this and other topics on our web site [www.digestivehealth.ws](http://www.digestivehealth.ws)

### Prior to the Examination

A thorough cleansing of the colon is essential and the examination is most successful if you follow the directions for preparation that we have provided to you. If you have any questions about the test or preparation, or problems during the prep, please do not hesitate to call our office. There is always someone "on call" to answer questions even if it is after the office closes.

Due to sedation you will not be able to drive after your procedure, therefore you must make arrangements for a ride home. You cannot drive, use a taxi, or a bus after the procedure. You must be accompanied by an adult that can take you home and assist you at home if necessary. Please confirm your ride several days prior to your procedure and insure that your schedule is clear the day of the procedure. If you do not have a ride home, we will not be able to allow you to go through with the procedure.

You will also want to make appropriate arrangements to be off work or school for the entire day of your procedure. If you must cancel your procedure, we must receive notice 72 hours in advance, otherwise a No Show/Cancellation fee of \$75 will be charged.

Please check with your insurance carrier to determine if you need pre-approval for the procedure and to understand your financial responsibility for the procedure. If you are having a colonoscopy for screening purposes (ie. having no problems, but having the exam for preventative purposes), verify with your insurance company that a "Screening Colonoscopy" is a covered benefit. There should be a number on your insurance card to call to verify your benefit and coverage.

### **Day of the Examination**

Please plan on being with us for approximately **60-90 Minutes**. It will be very helpful if you have all paperwork completed prior to your arrival.

On the day of the examination you may have clear liquids until 2 hours prior to your procedure unless otherwise instructed. Please see the preparation instructions for more specific instructions. When you arrive for your colonoscopy, we will review with you all of the paperwork you have completed and then you will change into an examination gown. The nurse will ask you additional questions regarding your history and medications. An I.V. will be started in your arm to provide you with I.V. fluids. A blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm and an oxygen sensor on your finger, so that your vital signs can be carefully monitored throughout the procedure. You will then be brought into the room where the test will be performed, and you will have an opportunity to speak with the physician who will be performing the procedure. The physician will review with you the informed consent information and offer you an opportunity to ask any additional questions. Once all of your questions are answered and you agree to proceed, you will then be given I.V. medication by your doctor and a CRNA (Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist) to keep you comfortable during the procedure. Propofol (a hypnotic agent) is the most common drug currently used for sedation, but Fentanyl (a narcotic pain medication) and Midazolam (a sedative) may be used. If you have allergies or sensitivities to any foods or medications, please make sure you let us know in advance. The level of sedation achieved with these medications is 'twilight sleep', or what is also referred to as "conscious sedation". While under the influence of the medications, you are able to breathe on your own. After the test, most patients realize that they have little to no recollection of the time while under the sedation, thus causing a brief amnesia effect.

The colonoscopy itself usually lasts about 20-30 minutes, then you will be moved to a recovery area. The recovery period is usually between twenty (20) and thirty (30) minutes. Due to the sedation, you may not remember any conversation you may have with our nursing staff or your doctor after the colonoscopy. Please have a family member or friend stay with you so they can be available to speak with the doctor or nurses after the procedure as needed. By law, you can not drive for the rest of the day after the colonoscopy. We advise you to take the entire day off work and maintain a light activity day.

### **THIS IS MANDATORY**

**YOU MUST HAVE A DRIVER TO DRIVE YOU HOME AFTER THE COLONOSCOPY - YOUR DRIVER SHOULD BE PREPARED TO REMAIN IN THE ENDOSCOPY WAITING AREA DURING YOUR ENTIRE PROCEDURE AND BE AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF YOUR DISCHARGE.**

## Results

If no biopsies or polyps are taken out during the procedure, the final results of the examination may be given to you that day. Due to the sedative medications and amnesia effect, we will provide you with written results and instructions; however it is also preferable to have someone with you that the physician and staff can speak with. Biopsy results are generally available **within two weeks** and a letter is sent to you by mail with a copy sent to your primary physician. If at any time you have any questions regarding your test or results, we encourage you to call us directly for additional explanation and information. A typewritten report will be sent to your primary physician and any other physicians that may need a copy of the report for your files.

## Benefits of Colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is performed to diagnose and/or treat many problems within the colon. Colonoscopy is felt to be, in almost all circumstances, "the gold standard test" given its high degree of accuracy. If a lesion, polyp or other abnormalities are found during a colonoscopy they can be removed for pathological evaluation, therefore colonoscopy has the ability to "treat" and not "just look". If there is a bleeding site identified, treatment can be given at that time to attempt to stop the bleeding. Other treatments (example - laser) are also available in specific circumstances.

## Alternatives to Colonoscopy

Alternative tests to colonoscopy include Barium Enema (also known as lower GI X-Ray) examination of the colon. Stool specimens can be examined for the presence of problems, such as blood or infection. Flexible sigmoidoscopy is similar to colonoscopy, but the examination is limited to approximately the lower one-third of the colon (large intestine). No I.V.'s or sedatives are usually given for these examinations. "Virtual colonoscopy" is an X-ray technique using CT or MRI to image the colon. In its current form, it does not appear as sensitive to finding colon polyps as colonoscopy. If a lesion or polyp is seen, a biopsy cannot be taken, nor can the lesion or polyp be removed with this technique. The patient would then need to repeat the prep and schedule a colonoscopy to directly examine the colon and perform biopsy or removal. Virtual colonoscopy requires similar bowel prep as standard colonoscopy.

## Side Effects and Risks of Colonoscopy

During the colonoscopy, air is used to inflate the colon to improve visualization. Prior to completion of the test, as much air as possible is suctioned out but usually cannot be completely removed. This may lead to some bloating, distention and/or discomfort after the procedure. The passage of gas after colonoscopy is often encouraged and lessens any discomfort. Serious risks with colonoscopy are uncommon (less than one in several thousand) but can include bleeding, perforation (making a hole in the bowel), infection or a reaction to one of the sedative medications. These rare events may require hospitalization for possible intravenous antibiotics, blood transfusions, and/or surgery. A diagnostic error or oversight can rarely occur. Other risks include a complication from an unrelated disease such as heart attack or stroke; death is extremely rare, but remains a remote possibility.

Patients that remain on anticoagulants such as Plavix are at increased risk of bleeding if polyps are removed. In the event large polyps are found and you are taking an anticoagulant your physician will not be able to remove the large polyps. This could result in your need for a second procedure. To avoid the potential for a second procedure, you have the option of stopping your anticoagulant 4 days prior to the procedure; however this increases your risk of stroke or blood clots. Any decision to alter your anticoagulant medication should only be done in consultation with your cardiologists or prescribing physician.

**Informed Consent**

Attached is an **example** of the informed consent statement that you will be asked to read and sign at the time of colonoscopy.

**CONSENT FOR PROCEDURE**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (patient name) give my permission for the following procedure(s): \_\_\_\_\_

to be performed by \_\_\_\_\_ (physician) and to receive conscious sedation as necessary for the procedure.

I understand the following and agree that my physician has discussed with me:

1. Nature of my illness.
2. Nature and purpose of the procedure.
3. Benefits of having the procedure.
4. Usual and most often risks of the procedure. This includes the risk that the procedure may not accomplish the goal of the procedure.
5. Alternatives have been discussed.
6. The risk of not performing the procedure.
7. I have had an opportunity to ask all questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
8. No guarantees have been made as to the result of the procedure.
9. I will need someone to drive me home and will not be permitted to ride home unaccompanied in a cab.

I consent to the use of intravenous medications to provide me with moderate sedation to relax me and minimize my discomfort. With moderate sedation, I will feel drowsy and may sleep throughout the procedure, but will easily awaken when spoken to or touched. The risks, benefits, and alternatives to moderate sedation have been discussed with me.

I understand that unexpected events or complications may occur during or following the procedure and that these events/complications may possibly involve additional procedures, treatment, hospitalization, and/or surgery. If complications occur, EMS will be called and I will be transferred to the local hospital even if I have an Advanced Directive or a Do Not Resuscitate Order. I understand Advanced Directives are not recognized in this facility.

I have the ability to make and communicate my health care decisions. By signing here, I fully understand the contents of this document and agree to proceed with the procedure.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Patient's Signature                      Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Witness Signature                      Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Authorized Person      Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Physician Signature                      Date**