



## A GUIDE TO COLONOSCOPY

Read these instructions (Part A) and the prep instructions (Part B) at least a week before you come for your procedure.

### WHAT IS A COLONOSCOPY?

A colonoscopy is a test to look at the lining of your large intestine. The purpose of the exam is to check for abnormalities, including growths called “polyps” that can lead to serious disease. A flexible colonoscope is inserted in your rectum by the doctor to examine your large intestine.

### HOW DO I GET READY?

#### One week before the exam: (5-7 days before your exam)

- Do not take Aspirin, Advil, Ecotrin, Bufferin, Nuprin, Exedrin, Aleve and/or Ibuprofen for 7 days before your exam. Tylenol (acetaminophen), Celebrex, and Mobic are fine to take.
- Stop taking iron or multivitamins that contain iron.
- If you use blood thinners Coumadin (Warfarin) or Plavix, contact your doctor about stopping it for 5-7 days.
- If you are a diabetic, contact your primary care doctor about diet changes required for this exam. If you take medication to control your blood sugar, ask your doctor for instructions about how to take your diabetes medication while preparing for the exam.
- **Start a low-roughage diet 3-4 days before the procedure:** avoid vegetables, fruits with skins or seeds, nuts, corn, popcorn, whole grain cereal or breads. Recommended foods: dairy products, pasta, white bread, meats, poultry and fish without skin.

#### Day before the exam:

- **Drink only clear liquids for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Solid foods or milk products are not allowed.** Clear liquids (not colored red or purple) include water, soda, broth, bouillon, coffee, tea, Kool-Aid, clear juices, Gatorade, Jello, and popsicles.
- \*For patients with a history of severe constipation, check with your doctor about drinking clear liquids for 2 days rather than 1 day prior to the exam.
- Follow your referring doctor’s instructions for the prescribed bowel preparation carefully (Part B). If your stool is not clear liquid, your exam may need to be rescheduled.

#### Day of the exam:

- If your bowel preparation has a morning dose, take it and the required clear liquids 3-4 hours before you leave your house for your appointment. Otherwise, **stop clear liquids 4 hours before the exam.** Do not eat or drink anything until after the exam. If your exam is in the afternoon, you may have clear liquids in the morning up until 4 hours prior to your exam.
- You may take your blood pressure medicine and any heart medicines with a sip of water.
- Bring a list of current medications and medication allergies with you.
- **Bring someone with you to drive you home.** You will be given sedatives during the exam and you will not be allowed to drive the rest of the day. However, please limit the number of people you bring with you to our waiting room. If you do not have a driver, your exam may be cancelled or rescheduled.
- **Arrive at the hospital one hour before your appointment** to allow for parking and registration in our department.

### REGISTRATION

- When you arrive at the hospital walk through the main entrance and ask the hospital receptionist to direct you to the Digestive Health Center. Enter our waiting room and check-in

at the reception desk. If your procedure is being done at the UVA Outpatient Surgery Center, check in at the front desk. After check-in you will be called to register. After registration, you will be called to the procedure area.

- Please keep in mind that appointments are approximate times. If a delay occurs, we will do our best to update you.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE EXAM?**

- A doctor will explain the benefits and risks of the exam to you and ask you to sign a consent form giving him/her permission to do the exam. Ask them any questions you might have.
- A nurse will place an IV (needle) in your arm to give you necessary medicines and fluids. You will be given sedation through the IV to help you relax.
- Your blood pressure, pulse and oxygen level will be checked throughout the test.
- During the test, you will lie on your left side.
- The doctor will first perform a rectal exam. A small flexible tube is then inserted into your rectum. You may feel some cramping or bloating during the test since your intestine will be partially filled with air to help the doctor look at the lining of your intestines.
- If the doctor sees anything unusual, he may take a biopsy (small piece of tissue). Your doctor may also remove any polyps or growths seen. You will not feel this.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE EXAM?**

- You will be taken to the recovery room to rest and sleep off the effects of the sedatives.
- Your blood pressure, pulse and oxygen level will be checked until you are fully awake.
- After you pass some remaining air, you will be offered something to drink.
- Your IV needle will be removed. You will be given specific discharge instructions which will note if a polyp or tissue was removed.
- The doctor will discuss the results of the exam with you. The results of your exam and any tissue analysis will be sent to the doctor that referred you for the exam in 1-2 weeks. **Please contact the physician who ordered your procedure to obtain your test results.**

### **AFTER YOU LEAVE**

- You may have some abdominal bloating or discomfort after the exam. Moving around will help relieve the gas pressure.
- You may resume your regular diet gradually. We recommend liquids and light foods that day.
- Complications of this exam are severe pain, rectal bleeding, shortness of breath or fever.

### **FOR PATIENTS DONE AT DIGESTIVE HEALTH CENTER:**

- If you have any complications, please call us at **(434) 982-0221** or the hospital operator **(434) 924-0000** and ask for the GI doctor on call. You may also go to your local emergency room.
- If you have any questions about the exam or the preparation, please call the endoscopy coordinator at **(434) 243-6346**. To cancel or reschedule your test please call **(434) 924-9999**.

### **FOR PATIENTS DONE AT UVA OUTPATIENT SURGERY CENTER:**

- If you have any complications, please call us at **(434) 951-4624** or the hospital operator **(434) 924-0000** and ask for the GI doctor on call (or the Family Medicine resident if your procedure was done by Dr. Scott Strayer). You may also go to your local emergency room.
- If you have any questions about the exam or the preparation, please call **(434) 951-4624**.
- To cancel or reschedule your test please call **(434) 951-4268**.