

## Colonoscopy Patient Information – Please Read Both Sides Thoroughly

### What is Colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy is a procedure that allows the physician to look directly at the lining of your large bowel (colon) and remove growths (polyps). Colonoscopy usually requires only light sedation and the procedure usually causes little or no pain. Reasons for doing Colonoscopy include screening for colon cancer in patients without symptoms, investigation of bowel symptoms (pain, bleeding, change in bowels, weight loss, positive fecal occult blood test), anemia, follow-up of patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease, previous polyps or bowel cancer.

### How is Colonoscopy done?

Colonoscopy involves inserting a flexible tube (scope) into the rectum and examining the lining of the colon. On the end of the scope is a tiny camera which projects images on monitors, enabling physicians to see the inside of the colon. As physicians steer the flexible tube through the colon, they are able to spot polyps and remove them with devices passed through the scope. Sedation is usually given to keep you comfortable.

### Your Initial Assessment

During your initial consultation, your doctor will ask you about your family history. These questions will help determine your risk level and the appropriate screening tests. You should be prepared to share information and let your doctor know if you:

- take medications, including over-the-counter pain relievers, blood thinners, or anticoagulants
- have any bleeding disorders
- have allergies to drugs or other substances
- have any medical conditions that may need special attention before or after a colonoscopy

If there is anything you do not understand during this visit, ask for more information

### What are the risks of colonoscopy?

- **Pain:** this can occur during and after the procedure. This is caused by stretching of the bowel and inflation of air during the procedure. This usually lasts only a brief time.
- **Perforation (puncture of the bowel):** There is a risk approximately 1 in 5000 for colonoscopy screening but increases to 1 in 1000 if polyps are removed. If this occurs, an operation will be necessary involving a stay in hospital for several days.
- **Hemorrhage (bleeding):** Bleeding occasionally occurs (1 in 5000) if polyps are removed or if biopsies are taken. If the bleeding cannot be controlled, a blood transfusion may be necessary, and occasionally, surgery may be needed.
- **Cardiac arrest and death:** This is extremely rare (less than 1 in 100,000). Staff at the clinic are trained to manage this very rare problem.
- **Drug reaction:** Occasionally patients may have adverse reactions to the drugs administered during the procedure. To reduce this risk, you must let the doctor and nurse know of any allergies you may have to medications.

### What are the Alternatives?

- **Barium Enema (x-rays):** This test involves inserting a special liquid (barium) into the colon that shows up on x-rays. This may miss up to 25% of lesions less than 1.5cm in size.
- **Flexible Sigmoidoscopy:** Must be combined with a Barium Enema for adequate screening. Less reliable than colonoscopy.
- **Virtual Colonoscopy:** This form of screening uses a computed tomography (CT) scan to generate an image of your colon

### **Before the Procedure**

The colon must be cleaned out completely. It is **ESSENTIAL** that the instructions for cleaning out the bowels are followed carefully. If your colon is not properly cleaned out, the test may need to be rescheduled. A full description of the preparation will be given to you on a separate sheet. Please call our office at 416.321.388 at least three days before the procedure to confirm your appointment time.

### **At the Time of the Procedure**

You will be given medications to sedate you and reduce pain and discomfort. The main objective is to safely examine the colon for polyps. If polyps are found, and are suitable for treatment with the colonoscope, they are removed and sent to the lab for analysis. Also, if other abnormalities are seen, the area will be biopsied. The procedure takes from 10-30 minutes to complete.

### **After the procedure**

You will be cared for in the recovery area until the effects of the medication have worn off. At this time, your doctor will inform you of the results of your colonoscopy and provide any additional information that you need to know. You will also be given instructions about how soon you can eat and drink, as well as guidelines for resuming your normal routine.

### **Your responsibility**

You must be accompanied by a responsible adult. You cannot drive a vehicle or operate machinery for the rest of the day. You are advised not to make any important decisions or sign any documents for the rest of the day following your procedure. All patients are given the amount of time needed to do the procedure safely and comfortable. Expect to be there for 2-3 hours in total.

### **Follow-Up**

A follow-up appointment will be made to discuss any lab results. The results are usually available within two weeks after the procedure.

### **More Information**

For further information about GTA Endoscopy, your procedure, and additional educational material, please visit us at [www.gtaendoscopy.com](http://www.gtaendoscopy.com)

### **What to wear?**

Loose fitting clothes such as track pants, Bring a tee-shirt with you. Do not wear jewellery and use only light makeup.

### **Directions**

- Hwy 401 to Markham Road
- North on Markham Road to Milner Avenue
- East on Milner
- Building is at the corner of Markham and Milner

Address: 305 Milner Ave., Suite 920, Scarborough, ON  
Phone: 416.321.3883

A parking lot is adjacent to the building. Parking is free for the first hour only.