What is a colonoscopy?

A doctor uses a flexible tube with a camera to look inside your colon.

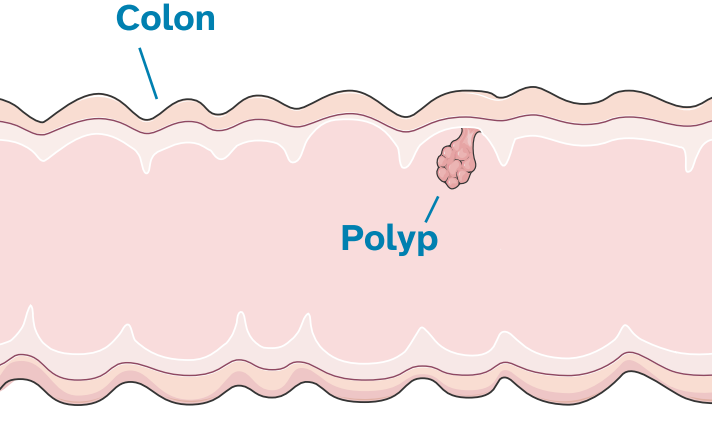
It can help find the cause of:

- bleeding from your anus
- changes in bowel movements
- pain in your belly
- unexplained weight loss

It can help find cancer.

Doctors can also look for polyps (small growths).

Removing polyps early may help prevent colon cancer.



Your notes:

This brochure is for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice.

Text adapted from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (niddk.nih.gov).

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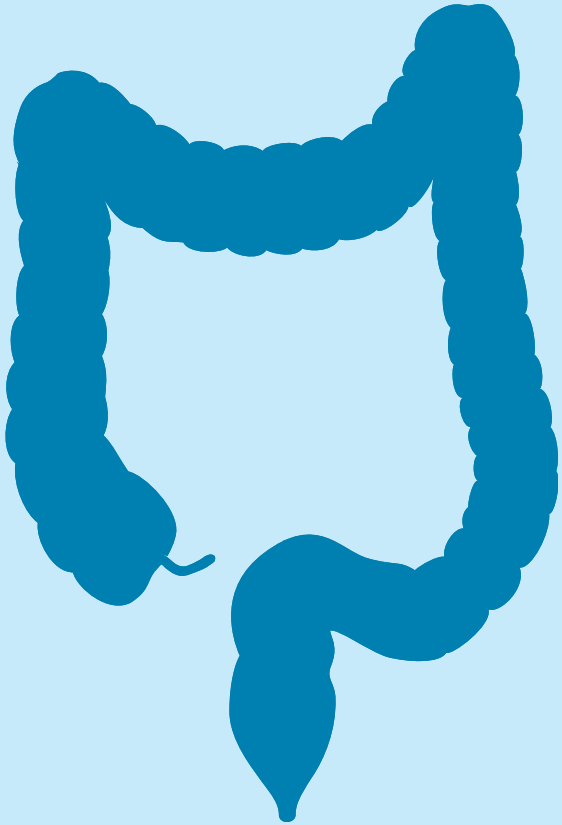
Health Information

Colonoscopy

Before, During, and After



1 Before

Tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins, and supplements you take.

Your doctor will give you bowel prep instructions to follow at home.

The bowel prep will cause diarrhea, so you should stay close to a bathroom.

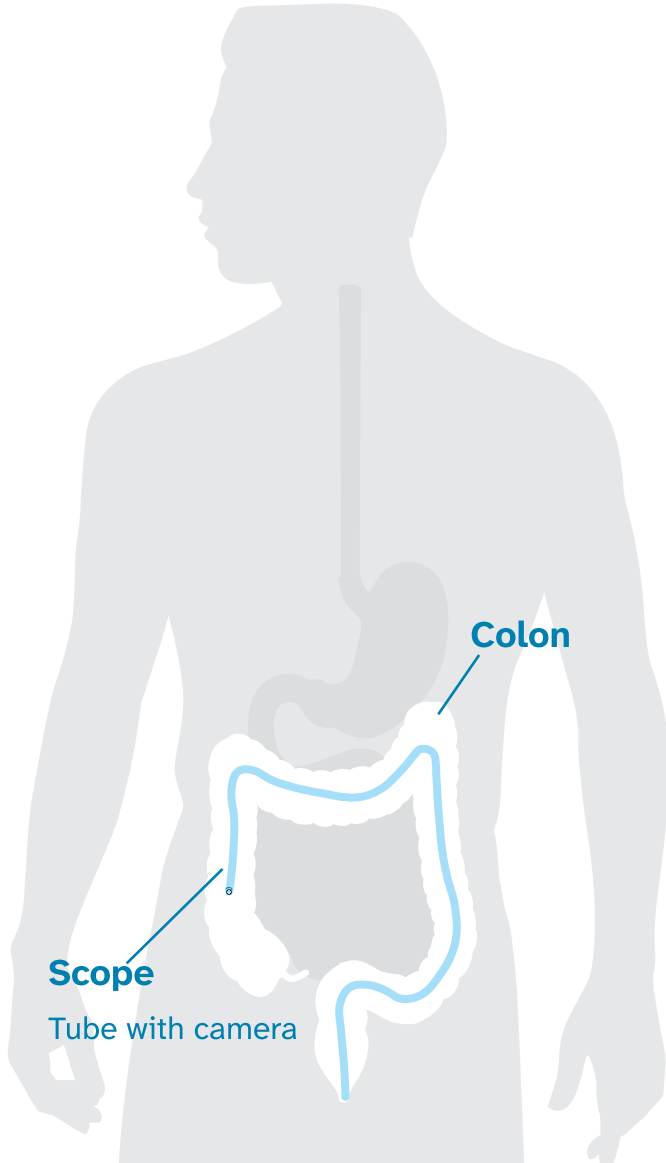
Stop eating when your instructions tell you to.

Stop drinking when your instructions tell you to.

Call your doctor if you have any questions.

2 During

Your doctor uses a flexible tube with a camera to look inside your colon.



3 After

You will need time to wake up after the colonoscopy.

You can't drive yourself home after a colonoscopy.

Your doctor will share the procedure results with you.

If your doctor performed a biopsy, a pathologist will examine the biopsy tissue.

Seek care right away if you have:

- severe pain in your abdomen
- fever
- bloody bowel movements
- bleeding that does not stop
- dizziness or weakness