



Overlake Internal Medicine Associates - Gastroenterology
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You have been referred to one of the gastroenterologists at Overlake Internal Medicine Associates for a colonoscopy. This guide answers some of the most commonly asked questions. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need more information or clarification.

What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is an examination of the colon lining with a lighted fiberoptic camera, or scope. The scope is a flexible tube about the thickness of your finger. The doctor will insert the scope through your rectum then up through your colon to check for abnormalities. If necessary, an instrument can be passed through the scope to take a small piece of tissue (biopsy) for examination in the lab. Biopsies are done for many reasons and do not necessarily imply cancer. During this process of diagnosis, your doctor may also perform other minor procedures, such as polyp removal.

The procedure will take about 20 minutes, but expect your visit with us to last about an hour and a half (1.5) if your procedure has been scheduled at Eastside Endoscopy Center and approximately three (3) hours if your procedure is scheduled at another facility such as a hospital. This time not only allows for the procedure but also for check-in, preparation and recovery.

Verifying Insurance Coverage

Be aware that **not all insurance plans cover colonoscopy for primary screening** of colon cancer. Please contact your primary care physician or your insurance company to determine if a prior referral is needed.

Medicare does cover the test with certain frequency restrictions, depending on personal and family history (ask us if you have any questions). Note that these frequency intervals do not apply if you have been having symptoms referable to your colon.

For people covered by **other insurance plans**, we highly recommend you check with your insurance company prior to the procedure. We encourage you to verify that screening colonoscopy is covered under your policy and to determine what the out of pocket responsibility may be, such as what your level of coverage is, if you have a deductible and/or a co-pay and if so, how much it is for this procedure. When you contact the insurance company, you will need to give them some information. You will need to know the name of the facility that the procedure will take place and the procedure codes. The procedure code for **screening colonoscopy** is 45378 and the diagnosis code is V76.51.

Please note that after the procedure, **you may receive up to four separate invoices from separate companies**. You will receive a bill from the physician who performed the procedure, one from the facility where the procedure was performed, one for anesthesia, and if you had tissue biopsied or removed, a bill from the pathology lab.

One week before the Procedure

- 1. Be sure to review and follow the separately enclosed bowel preparation instructions!**
2. If you are unable to keep your appointment, we require a 48 hour notice so that we may offer the time slot to someone else.
3. If you are a diabetic, be sure you have received instructions on how to manage your diabetic medications.

The day of the test – Important Information

1. Please bring the following when you come for your colonoscopy:
 - A list of all medications you are taking
 - A list of any allergies you have
 - Your health insurance cards

- A responsible adult to drive you home after your procedure. You will not be discharged until that person is here to take you.
 - Photo identification with current address such as a driver's license.
2. Please leave jewelry at home.
 3. Small children will be more comfortable at home.

The Procedure

In the preparation/reception area you will need to answer questions about your health history, current medicines and allergies. You will sign consent forms.

The procedure centers, such as Eastside Endoscopy Center or Overlake Hospital Medical Center are separate entities and do not have copies of all your records.

After you change into a hospital gown, a nurse will start an intravenous line (IV). The IV will be used to give you medication to make you more comfortable during the procedure. This medication may affect your memory of the procedure.

The procedure will be performed in a room specially designed for endoscopic procedures. Equipment that will help the nurse and doctor monitor your heartbeat, blood pressure and breathing will be connected to you.

You will be asked to lie on your left side. You will then be sedated before the doctor passes the lubricated tube into your rectum. As the tube passes through the curves of your colon, you may feel pressure or discomfort. You may receive medication throughout the procedure to keep you as comfortable as possible.

The doctor will put air into your colon in order to see the lining. After the procedure, as a result of the air, you may have some bloating or abdominal discomfort. You may feel as though you have to have a bowel movement. Pass the air if you feel the need.

If a biopsy and/or polyp removal is necessary, you should experience no pain.

Potential Complications

Complications are rare. However, there are potential complications associated with all medical procedures. The following complications are possible: perforation, bleeding, medication Phlebitis, drug reactions and complications from other diseases you may already have. Instrument failure and death are extremely rare but remain remote possibilities. Your physician will discuss their frequency with you, if you desire, with particular reference to your own indications for gastrointestinal Endoscopy.

Recovery

After your procedure, you will be taken to the recovery area. When you are ready to go home, the physician will talk to you, along with your family member or friend if you wish. The nurse will discuss instructions and answer your questions. You will be given a copy of the discharge summary.

You may not drive yourself home. Be sure to bring a responsible, licensed adult driver with you. A responsible adult will need to be with you when you are discharged from the recovery area.

At-home Instructions

You will be given specific written instructions about resuming your medications and diet.

- You may return to work or school the day after your procedure.
- Do not drive a vehicle or operate machinery for at least 12 hours after your procedure.
- Do not make any major legal or financial decisions for at least 12 hours after the procedure.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages for at least 12 hours following your procedure.

Test Results

If you had a biopsy or other type of testing, the results will be available to you in about 10 business days. You will either receive a phone call or you will receive the results in the mail.