

## ARE THERE RISKS WITH COLONOSCOPY?

### Some people may experience:

- Reaction to the medication including rash, fever, nausea, vomiting, bloating or breathing problems.
- Redness and soreness at the IV site or rectum.
- Small amounts of blood in the stool for 1 to 2 days if the doctor took a biopsy or removed a polyp.

### Uncommon but serious side effects may include:

- Aspiration of stomach contents into the lungs due to the sedation.
- A perforation, or tear, in the colon wall, treated with antibiotics and sometimes surgery to repair the tear.
- Possibility of missing a polyp or small tumour.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- Sometimes the test cannot be completed if the bowel is not thoroughly emptied or for technical reasons. The doctor and endoscopy suite staff will advise you on the next steps.
- During the first week following the test, go to the nearest emergency department if you experience chills, fever, heavy bleeding or severe abdominal pain.

### Please note:

The information in **this handout** is only meant for the person who received it from their healthcare team. **It is not to replace any advice or instructions given by your doctor.**

If you have an appointment scheduled and need more information or wish to **reschedule**, please contact the QEHEndoscopy Unit directly at **902-894-0059**, for Charlottetown, Queen Elizabeth Hospital

You can also reach out to your family doctor, nurse practitioner, or general surgeon if you have any questions.

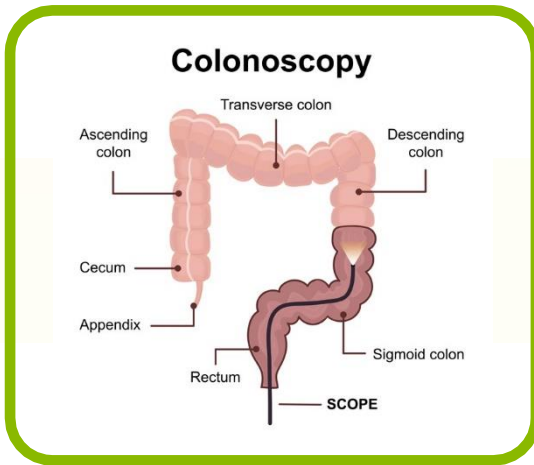
In case your colonoscopy was managed by a **Colorectal Cancer Screening Navigator**, please contact them at **1-855-733-0762**.



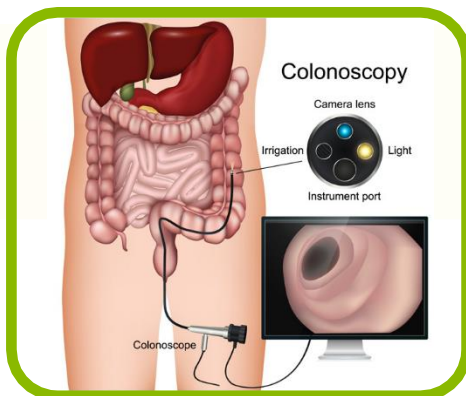
**COLONOSCOPY**  
**INFORMATION**

**Health PEI**

## WHAT IS A COLONOSCOPY?

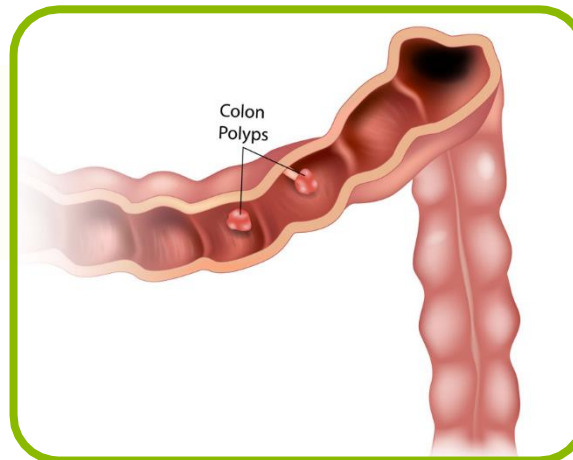


- A colonoscopy is a test that uses a colonoscope, or scope, to examine the lining of the rectum and colon. The rectum and colon make up the large intestine, also often called the bowel.
- A scope is a long flexible tube with a camera and a light at the end.



## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING A COLONOSCOPY?

- Before the test begins, a nurse will insert an intravenous (IV) line to give you medicines including sedation, pain and antibiotic as needed to ensure your comfort and safety.
- You will be lying on your side as the doctor inserts the scope into the anus, gently pushing it through the bowel.
- The test allows the doctor to examine the bowel lining to determine the cause of any bleeding, the presence of any ulcers, inflammation, polyps (small tissue growths) or cancerous growths.
- The doctor may take biopsies, small tissue samples for lab testing, or remove polyps. Most polyps are non-cancerous.



## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A COLONOSCOPY?

- After the test, it is normal to have mild abdominal cramping and passing of gas.
- If you received sedation medication for the test, you might be considered impaired for up to 24 hours.
  - You should not sign any legal documents.
  - You will not be able to drive yourself home. You will need a trusted person to meet you at the endoscopy unit to pick you up from the hospital.
  - You should not drink alcohol or take sleeping pills or anti-anxiety medications.
  - You should not be responsible for another person's care, e.g. a baby, young child, or person in poor health.
  - You can begin drinking full fluids and advance to a regular diet as tolerated.
- If you take blood-thinning medication, discuss when to restart these medications with the doctor. Resume all other medications as usual unless told otherwise.