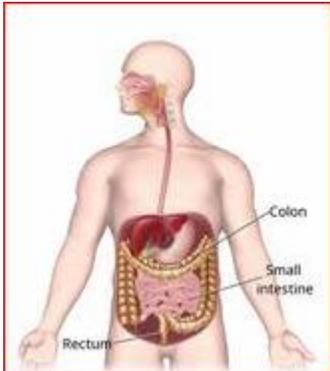


Virtual Colonoscopy



Virtual colonoscopy is a procedure that can be used to examine the small intestine, large intestine (*colon*), and the rectum. In this procedure, X-rays (CT scan) and computers are used to produce images of these body areas. The exam can help to find problems such as tumors, polyps, and diverticulosis.

Virtual colonoscopy provides a way to examine the colon without inserting a flexible instrument (*colonoscope*) into the colon, which is how a regular colonoscopy is done. However, during a virtual colonoscopy, your health care provider:

- May not be able to see smaller polyps.
- Cannot remove polyps.
- Cannot take tissue samples.

If problems are found during this procedure, or if the cause of any symptoms cannot be found, a regular colonoscopy may need to be done.

Tell a health care provider about:

- Any allergies you have.
- All medicines you are taking, including vitamins, herbs, eye drops, creams, and over-the-counter medicines.
- Any blood disorders you have.
- Any surgeries you have had.
- Any medical conditions you have.
- Whether you are pregnant or may be pregnant.

What are the risks?

Generally, this is a safe procedure. However, problems may occur, including:

- A tear in the lining of the colon from inflating the colon with air during the procedure. The risk of this is small.
- Exposure to radiation (a small amount).

What happens before the procedure?

Eating and drinking restrictions

Follow instructions from your health care provider about eating and drinking, which may include:

- A few days before the procedure – follow a low-fiber diet. Avoid nuts, seeds, dried fruit, raw fruits, and vegetables.
- 1–2 days before the procedure – follow a clear liquid diet. Drink only clear liquids, such as clear broth or bouillon, black coffee or tea, clear juice, clear soft drinks or sports drinks, gelatin dessert, and frozen ice pops.
- On the day of the procedure – **do not** eat or drink anything during the 2 hours before the procedure, or within the time period that your health care provider recommends.

Bowel prep

If you were prescribed an oral bowel prep to clean out your colon:

- Take it as told by your health care provider. Starting the day before your procedure, you will need to drink a large amount of medicated liquid. The liquid will cause you to have multiple loose stools until your stool is almost clear or light green.
- If your skin or anus gets irritated from diarrhea, you may use these to relieve the irritation:
 - Medicated wipes, such as adult wet wipes with aloe and vitamin E.
 - A skin-soothing product like petroleum jelly.
- If you vomit while drinking the bowel prep, take a break for up to 60 minutes and then begin the bowel prep again. If vomiting continues and you cannot take the bowel prep without vomiting, call your health care provider.

Medicines

- Ask your health care provider about changing or stopping your regular medicines. This is especially important if you are taking diabetes medicines or blood thinners.
- You may also be instructed to take a special medication to identify stool in your colon. The medication will help identify the difference between colon problems and stool residue during the test.

What happens during the procedure?

- You will lie on your back on a table.
- A small, flexible tube will be inserted into your rectum.
- Air will be pumped through the tube. This will inflate your colon so your health care provider can see better.
- The table you are lying on will move into the scanner, and images will be taken of your colon. Your health care provider will be able to view these images on a video screen.
- During the scan, you will be able to see, hear, and talk to the person running the machine while you are in it. Follow that person's instructions. You may need to hold your breath. This will help to make the images clearer.
- You will change positions so that you are lying on your belly or side. Then more scans will be done.
- When the best possible pictures have been taken, the machine will be turned off. The table will be moved out of the machine.

The procedure may vary among health care providers and hospitals.

What happens after the procedure?

- Return to your normal activities and your normal diet as told by your health care provider.

- It is up to you to get the results of your procedure. Ask your health care provider, or the department that is doing the procedure, when your results will be ready.
- Call your health care provider right away if you have severe abdominal pain, vomiting, or fever.

Summary

- Virtual colonoscopy is a procedure that can be used to examine the small intestine, large intestine (*colon*), and the rectum. In this procedure, X-rays (CT scan) and computers are used to produce images of these body areas.
- Before the procedure, follow instructions from your health care provider about eating and drinking. Take the bowel prep as directed by your health care provider.
- During the procedure, you will lie on a table that will move into a scanning machine so that images can be taken. Your health care provider will be able to view these images on a video screen.
- After the procedure, follow your health care provider's instructions about returning to your normal activities and diet. Ask when your results will be ready.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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