



COLONOSCOPY/ENDOSCOPY FAQ's

Frequently Asked Questions Before a GI Procedure

Why do I need a colonoscopy? As a screening test, colonoscopy is the best way to detect and prevent colon cancer. It also allows us to identify polyps (the benign starting point of colon cancer). By identifying these polyps and removing them, we can prevent the vast majority of colon cancers. Colonoscopy can also be an important tool for diagnosing the cause of colon-related symptoms (constipation, diarrhea, rectal bleeding, abdominal pain) as well as abnormal imaging results.

Why do I have to do a split prep? The split prep offers the safest and highest quality exam. The first part of the prep involves taking most of the laxative the evening before your colonoscopy (please follow the prep given to you based on your upcoming procedure). The second part of the prep involves taking the remaining portion of the laxative 5 hours prior to your procedure time. This ensures that the mucus layer that accumulates in the colon through the night is rinsed out. Otherwise, it can act like a varnish to hide subtle blemishes in the colon that could be significant precancerous lesions.

Why can't I eat seeds and high-residue foods for 5 days prior to procedure? High-residue foods can sometimes be difficult to rinse from the colon. Since they can't be suctioned through the colonoscope, they end up clogging the instrument. This keeps us from getting the best view of all colon surfaces and can reduce the quality of your exam.

Why can't I chew gum or drink any water the morning of my endoscopic procedure? You can't drink anything (not even water or ice) or chew gum for at least 3 hours prior to your procedure because you'll be receiving anesthesia. If there's fluid in your stomach, this could increase your risk of a complication (aspiration). You can take small sips of water with your essential medications the morning of the procedure.

Can I eat regular food after my procedure? In most cases, yes. If you have an upset stomach or nausea, you may want to eat lightly at first, but the vast majority of people can enjoy regular food shortly after the procedure.

Can I go to work after my procedure? Because you'll receive anesthesia, your judgment and reflexes may be impaired. You cannot work, drive or make important decisions for the remainder of the day.

Can I exercise after my procedure? The anesthesia could affect your coordination or cause dehydration, so you should not exercise for the remainder of the day.

Can I take my medications the morning of the procedure? All medications will be reviewed with you during your pre-admission call with an RN. You'll need to confirm with your primary care physician about diabetic, cardiac/blood pressure and seizure medications. If your primary care physician recommends you take medication, you should take them with sips of water, 4 hours prior to your procedure start time (not your arrival time).

I need to cancel my procedure and couldn't leave a message when I called the GI procedure line; what should I do? Call our scheduling line to cancel and reschedule your procedure at 314-387-2321.

My pharmacy never got a prescription for my bowel prep; what should I do? We can call it in for you now. Please call us at 314-387-2321.

Do I have to have a ride home when I come in for my procedure? Yes, you will receive anesthesia and will not be allowed to drive home after your procedure.

How do I get the biopsy results from my procedures? You should hear from your physician within 2 weeks. If you have chosen MyMercy as your primary form of communication, you'll receive results within 2 weeks electronically.

Does a colonoscopy really prevent cancer? Yes, by finding polyps (the starting point for most colon cancers) and removing them, we can prevent the vast majority of colon cancers from occurring. If polyps are seen during your colonoscopy your physician will likely remove them at that time.

Why is a COVID-19 test required prior to my surgery? This allows us to properly plan for your upcoming procedure. We want to reduce exposure and make sure your procedure is scheduled in the right type of room, and that the surgical team wears the appropriate personal protective equipment.

Why do I have to get my COVID-19 Test within 72 hours of surgery? This allows time for your results to be processed before you start your prep.

What if my COVID-19 results are positive? If your COVID-19 test results are positive, your physician will contact you to discuss your results. The procedure will be delayed for 30 days and you will be referred back to your PCP. If you do not have a PCP, we can assist with a referral to Mercy Virtual Care.

The safety of our patients and caregivers has been, and always will be, our priority. We follow strict standards for disinfecting, required masking for patients, visitors and co-workers, and social distancing.

Please do your part by following these and other CDC guidelines.