

Colonoscopy

What is a colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy is a test that allows your doctor to look directly into the colon (large intestine) with a long flexible tube containing a camera. During the procedure, the doctor may take tiny samples of tissue called biopsies. The biopsies often help your doctor determine the cause of your child's symptoms. Some common reasons why children may need a colonoscopy include: Blood in the bowel movements, diarrhea, abdominal pain, rectal pain, or weight loss.

Will my child feel any discomfort during the procedure?

Your child should not feel any discomfort during the procedure. He/she will be given medication by vein (intravenous) to help him/her sleep through the procedure. Although they will be completely unaware and asleep during the procedure, general anesthesia is generally not necessary.

What should you expect before and after the test?

Prior to undergoing a colonoscopy, your child will be given medications to flush out all of the stool. The type of preparation to flush the stool will depend upon your child's age. Typically for older children, the medication is given by mouth as either liquid or pill form. For very young children, your doctor may recommend enemas or medication by the rectum, as part of the cleansing process. It is very important that your child drink large amounts of clear fluid on the day before the test. Starting on midnight the night before the procedure, it is important that your child not drink or eat anything. This can cause problems with the sleep medication that is administered to your child before the test.

After the test is complete, your doctor will speak with you to let you know if there were any visible abnormalities during the test. Your child can return to school the next day. The biopsy samples that are taken during the procedure are very important part of the results and usually take approximately one week to return. Dr. Erhart will see your child in followup the following week. At the time of the followup visit, she will review the results and discuss a treatment plan.

What kind of problems should alert me to call my doctor after a colonoscopy?

Stomach pain that lasts for longer than one hour

Repeated episodes of throwing up.

More than a small amount of bleeding. Less than a spoonful can be normal for 1-2 days.

Fever that does not go away within 12 hours