

Colonoscopy and Sigmoidoscopy

What is it?

Colonoscopy and sigmoidoscopy are diagnostic procedures for cancer of the colon. It is recommended by the American Cancer Society that all women and men should have one of these examinations at age 50, and then every three to ten years for life. The procedures are performed by inserting a special telescope (endoscope) through the rectum in order to visualize the lining of the colon. This allows the physician to see polyps, cancers, or other problems at very early stages of growth. Sigmoidoscopy is an office procedure which visualizes the lower one third of the colon. Colonoscopy is a day surgery procedure under conscious sedation which visualizes the entire colon.

Why Do I Need It?

These examinations are recommended in order to detect cancer of the colon while it is still in an early stage that can be completely treated in most cases. Cancer of the colon is one of the most common cancers in women over age 50 and treatment is highly successful when detected early. Colonoscopy and sigmoidoscopy are very accurate in locating cancers of the colon. The procedures are relatively simple and considered very safe.

Isn't The "Stool for Occult Blood" Test Good Enough?

The "stool for occult blood" test is a card and envelope which you take home to sample three bowel movements and send back to the office. It is a test for blood in the stool, which may be a sign of cancer of the colon. However, blood in the stool is a relatively late symptom of colon cancer and may not even be present in all cases (about 50%). Either colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy is necessary to detect colon cancer in the earliest stages.

How Do I Arrange it?

Colonoscopy and sigmoidoscopy should be performed by a physician with special training in this procedure. We recommend that you call the office of Eugene Gastroenterology Consultants (Drs. Knecht, Kratka, Phillips, Chamberlain, Kay, and Wu) at 484-4500. The address of their office is 677 E. 12th Ave., Suite N-500, Eugene, Oregon 97401. When you call for an appointment, be sure to say that you are referred from our office.

When Will I Get the Results?

The physician performing your examination will usually discuss the results with you right after the procedure. He/she will also tell you if any other tests are necessary and when you should have your next examination. A report will also be sent to our office and placed in your chart.