

COLONOSCOPY INSTRUCTIONS

Dr. Alison Smith

Please read through this information thoroughly at least one week prior to your appointment. Please call me if you have any questions about the procedure or the bowel prep.

Videoscopic colonoscopy is a way of examining the colon and rectum that uses computer video technology to give me a high definition view of the inside of the large intestine. I can guide a narrow flexible tube the entire length of the colon and diagnose and treat a number of conditions. The colonoscope has attachments which enable me to take biopsies and remove polyps without you feeling any pain.

Despite its safety, colonoscopy must be considered an operation, and I am required to inform you that there is a small possibility of complications. These include bleeding, perforation of the colon and reaction to medications. In very rare instances, perforation or bleeding might require colon surgery to correct, but this is necessary in only one out of every thousand cases. The risks are indeed small and I would not ask you to undergo colonoscopy unless the benefits substantially outweighed the risks.

The morning of your colonoscopy, you will arrive at West Valley Hospital at the specified time and the nurses will help you get ready. At the beginning of the examination, you will get intravenous medications that will help you feel relaxed and sedated. This will make the experience as pleasant as possible. The medications are short acting and should wear off soon after the end of the colonoscopy. However, there is always some continued sedation for a few hours afterwards. Therefore, someone must drive you home. You will usually be released about an hour after the end of the procedure.

The colonoscopy itself lasts about 30-40 minutes. Any discomfort during the procedure comes from the manipulation of the colonoscope and is usually gone the moment the examination is over. Most people tell me they don't remember anything about the exam at all. Apart from some gas, symptoms following colonoscopy are mild. In the rare case that you experience any actual pain or bleeding (or anything that concerns you), don't hesitate to give the office a call. After your colonoscopy, you may resume a normal diet, unless told otherwise by me. Occasionally, if a large polyp (or several small ones) is removed, I may have you stay on a liquid diet for a day.

You will not be legally allowed to operate machinery, including an automobile, for the remainder of the day following your colonoscopy. There are no exceptions, even if you are feeling fine.

The next page describes the steps you need to follow to be sure that your colon is as clean as possible so that I can see the entire colon. This is called a “**bowel prep**”.