

3. STAY RELAXED ON TEST DAY



A colonoscopy is an endoscopic procedure, meaning a scope is inserted through the anus to view the colon. Your gastroenterologist is skilled at moving the scope in a way that creates minimal discomfort. Sedation is generally available for the procedure.

Good communication between you and your health care team on test day is the key to making your experience a positive one. Increased anxiety or fear can make the scoping process less comfortable. Don't be afraid to ask questions about sedation, about the test process, or about managing discomfort.

After the test is complete, ask questions about the results. Your physician will let you know if there were any polyps or signs of cancer. And finally, find out when it will be necessary for you to have your next colonoscopy or if there are any further steps you need to take.

For more information about colon cancer, and its symptoms, screening and treatment, please visit:

GetYourRearInGear.com/Education

This information is provided for educational purposes only. Consult your own physician before making any medical decisions.



Get Your Rear in Gear® began in 2005 when Kristin Lindquist Tabor planned a 5K race as a tribute to Susie Lindquist Mjelde who lost her battle with colon cancer at the age of 46. Since that time, Get Your Rear in Gear has expanded nationally drawing over 30,000 runners and walkers annually at over 40 events.



Funds raised at Get Your Rear in Gear events stay in the local communities to educate about the disease, support survivors and caregivers, and provide screening to those who are under-insured or uninsured. The money is distributed through grants from the Colon Cancer Coalition, the business arm of Get Your Rear in Gear.

By joining forces with like-minded individuals across the country, Get Your Rear in Gear hopes to make *colon*, *colonoscopy*, and *colorectal* everyday language, help to help overcome fear, and decrease deaths from colon cancer.

For a list of Get Your Rear in Gear events or to start an event in your area, visit:

GetYourRearInGear.com/Events



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COLON CANCER:

Don't Dread the Colonoscopy



GetYourRearInGear.com

How NOT to DREAD A COLONOSCOPY:

3 STEPS TO MAKE THIS IMPORTANT SCREENING TEST MORE COMFORTABLE

A colonoscopy is one of the most important preventative procedures that you will undergo.

The test is considered the gold standard for colon cancer detection and prevention. And yet, most people dread the thought of it. With a little bit of education and planning, getting a colonoscopy can be more comfortable. Follow these steps to make your colon cancer screening more tolerable.

1. GET INFORMED AND GET SCHEDULED

Sometimes, the worst part of getting the colonoscopy is making the decision to have the test performed in the first place. A common reason that people avoid a colonoscopy is that they don't think they need one. If they aren't having symptoms or have no family history of colon cancer they feel that they don't need to be screened for the disease. Most colon cancer cases, however, are found in people with no family history of the disease. And often patients report they felt no symptoms prior to being diagnosed.

During a colonoscopy, your physician can not only detect signs of colon cancer, but can also remove pre-cancerous polyps that have the potential to become cancer over time.

Understanding the preventative potential of the test may make scheduling a colonoscopy more tolerable.



In most cases, your physician will discuss the procedure during your annual physical. But if symptoms arise, don't hesitate to contact your health care team and ask to have the test performed. When scheduling the procedure, keep in mind that you will need to take test day and prep day (the day before the exam) off from work.

On prep day, you will need to be close to a bathroom and may experience some discomfort. On test day, your sedation choice may make it unsafe for you to drive or perform work duties. Be sure to have a friend or family member available for transportation to and from the procedure.

2. GET PREPPED

On the day before your colonoscopy, your physician will ask you to perform a "prep" to cleanse the colon. A clean colon makes it easier to find and remove polyps, so doing a thorough bowel cleaning is essential. Be sure to read the instructions given to you by your physician and clarify any confusion by calling and speaking to your health care provider in advance.

In most cases, cleansing the digestive tract means consuming a clear liquid diet on the day before the exam. This means that you will avoid any solid foods and will only be drinking clear fluids that are approved by your health care team.



Be sure to have a kitchen that is well stocked with products such as:

- clear fruit juices
- Jell-O (no red, blue, or purple coloring)
- clear soft drinks
- coffee (no milk or creamer)
- broth

In addition, your physician will prescribe a liquid laxative. You may consume up to a gallon of this liquid over the course of a day. Be sure to follow instructions and drink all of the fluid that is prescribed.

Unfortunately, most people find the solution disagreeable to drink. Tips for getting it down include:

- Drinking through a straw placed at the back of the mouth
- Keeping the fluid cold
- Sucking on tart hard candies or lemon to mute the taste

Being close to a bathroom during the prep is essential. In fact, some people drink the laxative in the bathroom because bowel movements may begin immediately after you begin drinking.

You may find it comfortable to use flushable moistened wipes instead of toilet paper or to apply hemorrhoid cream to protect your skin.



Source list:

- Harvard Health Publications: *Preparing for a Colonoscopy.*
- Johns Hopkins Medicine Health Alerts: *9 Tips to Make Your Colonoscopy Easier*
- Harvard Health Publications: *Preparing for a Colonoscopy.*