

COLONOSCOPIES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Perhaps you've been experiencing intestinal problems such as abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, chronic constipation or chronic diarrhea. Or maybe your doctor has recommended a colon cancer screening. These are some of the many reasons you may be a candidate for a colonoscopy. Colonoscopies are used both preventively to catch colon cancer in its early stages or remove polyps before they become cancerous, and diagnostically to identify the cause of intestinal symptoms.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is an exam that views the inside of the colon (large intestine) and rectum, using a tool called a colonoscope. The colonoscope has a small camera attached to a flexible tube that can reach the length of the colon. The procedure is usually performed by a gastroenterologist.

READ ON TO LEARN:

- Why your health care provider may want you to schedule a colonoscopy
- What you can expect during the procedure
- How you can help limit your out-of-pocket expenses

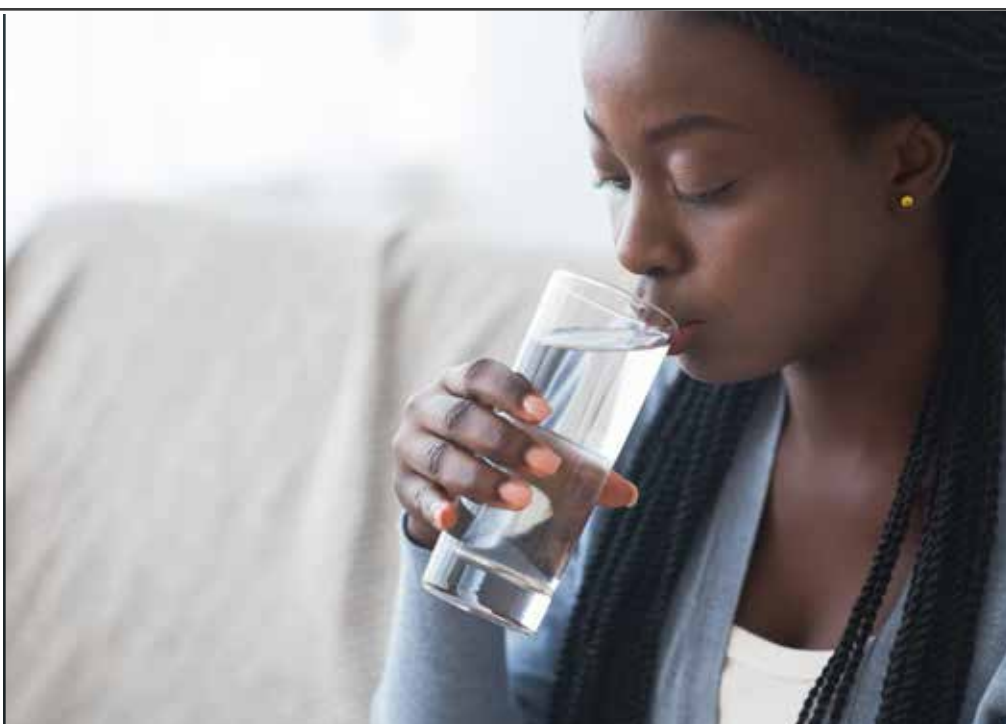


Why would you need a colonoscopy?

Colonoscopies are used for screening, diagnosing problems and monitoring past issues.

Some of the most common reasons people undergo colonoscopies are:

- Abdominal pain, changes in bowel movements or weight loss
- Polyps found on sigmoidoscopy or X-ray. Polyps are small growths, usually benign and with a stalk, protruding from a mucous membrane
- Anemia due to low iron (usually when no other cause has been found)
- Bloody or black, tarry stools
- Follow-up of a past finding, such as polyps or colon cancer
- Inflammatory bowel disease (ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease)
- Screening for colorectal cancer (recommended for people at average risk starting at age 45)



How do you prepare for a colonoscopy?

A successful colonoscopy can only be performed if your colon is clear of stool. You'll be asked to empty your colon before the procedure. This may include any of the following:

- Adhering to a clear, liquid diet the day before an exam. You'll be asked not to consume anything red as it may be confused with blood during the procedure.
- Taking a laxative. This may be in pill or liquid form, and is usually taken the night before and/or the morning of the procedure.
- Using an enema kit.
- You may also be asked to adjust your medications days or weeks before the colonoscopy, especially those that thin the blood or contain iron.

What can you expect during your colonoscopy?

You will change into a hospital gown and will be given a mild sedative in the form of a pill and/or through an IV. You may also be given IV pain medication to minimize discomfort. Then you will be asked to lay on your left side with your knees drawn up toward your chest.

Once you are sedated, a scope will be gently inserted through your anus and carefully moved into the beginning of the large intestine then slowly advanced as far as the lowest part of the small intestine. Air will be inserted through the scope to provide a better view. Suction may be used to remove fluid or stool.

The doctor can get a better view as the scope is moved back out. Tissue samples (biopsies) or polyps may be removed using tiny tools inserted through the scope. Photos may be taken using the camera at the end of the scope. The procedure will take about 30 minutes. You should not feel any pain, and you probably won't remember anything.



You will be awakened immediately after the procedure. The doctor may be able to give you some feedback based on what could be seen during the procedure and will let you know if any polyps or tissue samples were removed. It may take several days or weeks to get results from tissue samples (biopsies).

Someone will need to drive you home about an hour after the colonoscopy. You may pass gas, have mild abdominal cramping or feel bloated that day. You shouldn't drive, operate machinery, drink alcohol or make important decisions for 24 hours.



Where can you get a colonoscopy?

Colonoscopies may be done in a doctor's office, hospital, clinic or surgery center. You should feel empowered to work with your doctor to choose the facility that works best for you in terms of both convenience and price, taking into account the reason for your colonoscopy. Very ill patients may be advised to have the procedure performed in a hospital.



“More than ever, consumers can have a tangible impact on their own wallet share in health care by making more optimal choices on where and how to get care.”

*Barton R. Halling,
Director of Activation
Strategies for UMR*

Health education
library



**To learn more about
colonoscopies, visit the
Health Education Library
on [umar.com](https://www.umar.com).**

**CLINK THE LINK TO TAKE A SHORT SURVEY TO
PROVE COMPLETION:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JDBYMRP>

How much does a colonoscopy cost?

The price of a colonoscopy can vary from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on what type of doctor performs the procedure; whether an anesthesiologist administers the sedation; whether the doctor removes tissue samples and how much lab fees cost; and whether the procedure is a screening (preventive) or diagnostic.

Other factors that can impact the price include:

- **WHERE YOU LIVE**

A colonoscopy may cost more or less depending on whether it is done in a rural, urban or suburban area.

- **WHERE THE FACILITY IS LOCATED**

Costs can vary among similar facilities located just miles apart.

- **WHAT TYPE OF FACILITY YOU CHOOSE**

Hospitals have more overhead costs than surgery centers or doctor's offices, and this could be reflected in higher costs of services for patients.

- **THE REPUTATION OF THE FACILITY IN THE MARKET**

Some people are willing to pay more for a better consumer experience, whether it's upscale décor or a reputation for good bedside manner.

“It's important to remember that you have the power – and the right – to discuss your options with your health care provider and lead the decision-making process,” says Barton R. Halling, Director of Activation Strategies for UMR. “Educated, informed consumers inevitably make better purchasing decisions.”

How can you get the best price?

Unfortunately, it's difficult to simply call up a facility and find out how much a colonoscopy will cost you. Variables, such as the type of health coverage you carry, whether you've met your deductible or out-of-pocket limits, your co-insurance, your provider network's negotiated rate with the facility, and whether you visit an in-network or out-of-network provider, can all influence the final cost.

Fortunately, UMR can help take some of the guesswork out of the equation – and put the purchasing power back into your hands. Visit [umar.com](https://www.umar.com) to access tools, such as the Health cost estimator, to find out how much you are likely to pay for a colonoscopy or other procedure before your appointment.