

The COLONOSCOPY

A colonoscopy is a routine, safe, and effective procedure

that healthcare providers use to visually examine the full lining of the colon and rectum. This procedure is the best way for a healthcare provider to view the entire colon to see if there are any problems.

What happens during a colonoscopy?

- A colonoscopy involves the use of a colonoscope—a long, thin, flexible instrument connected to a camera and video display monitor
- The colonoscope is inserted into the rectum and moved through the entire colon
- If the healthcare provider notices anything of concern during the colonoscopy, a biopsy (removing a small amount of tissue to examine) may be performed



What is the colonoscope looking for?

A colonoscopy makes it possible to find and remove growths that exist in the colon. From colon disease to abnormal tissue growths, a colonoscope allows the healthcare provider to investigate without surgery.

Who should get a colonoscopy?

People 50 and older should undergo a colonoscopy every 10 years. If you have additional risk factors, healthcare providers could recommend the procedure be completed more frequently.

A routine colonoscopy could save your life

It may surprise you to discover that colon cancer is preventable if the early warning signs are detected through a colonoscopy. Still, less than half of Americans 50 and older undergo a colonoscopy.¹

ADHESIONS

- Abnormal bands of tissue that grow in the body
- Similar to scar tissue
- Most commonly caused by abdominal surgical procedures
- Common complication is intestinal obstruction—where an adhesion wraps around the intestine and prevents flow of the digestive tract
- May relieve itself or require medical intervention

FLAT POLYP/LESION

- This is another precancerous growth on the colon wall
- If caught early, can be removed, aiding in the prevention of colon cancer
- Difficult to detect without effective prepping and an accurate colonoscopy

POLYP

- An abnormal tissue growth on the wall of the colon
- Usually slow growing and the first sign of potential colon cancer
- The colonoscopy is one of the most accurate methods of detection

- If caught early, polyps can be removed, aiding in the prevention of colon cancer
- Symptoms may not be noticeable

ULCERATIVE COLITIS

- A form of inflammatory bowel disease that includes inflammation and sores, called ulcers, in the lining of the rectum and colon
- Ulcers form where inflammation destroys the cells of the colon wall, eventually bleeding and producing pus
- Colon inflammation will make the colon empty frequently, causing diarrhea

APPENDICITIS

- A condition characterized by inflammation of the appendix
- Mild cases may resolve without treatment, but most require removal
- Removal is typically performed using minimally invasive surgery

CROHN'S DISEASE

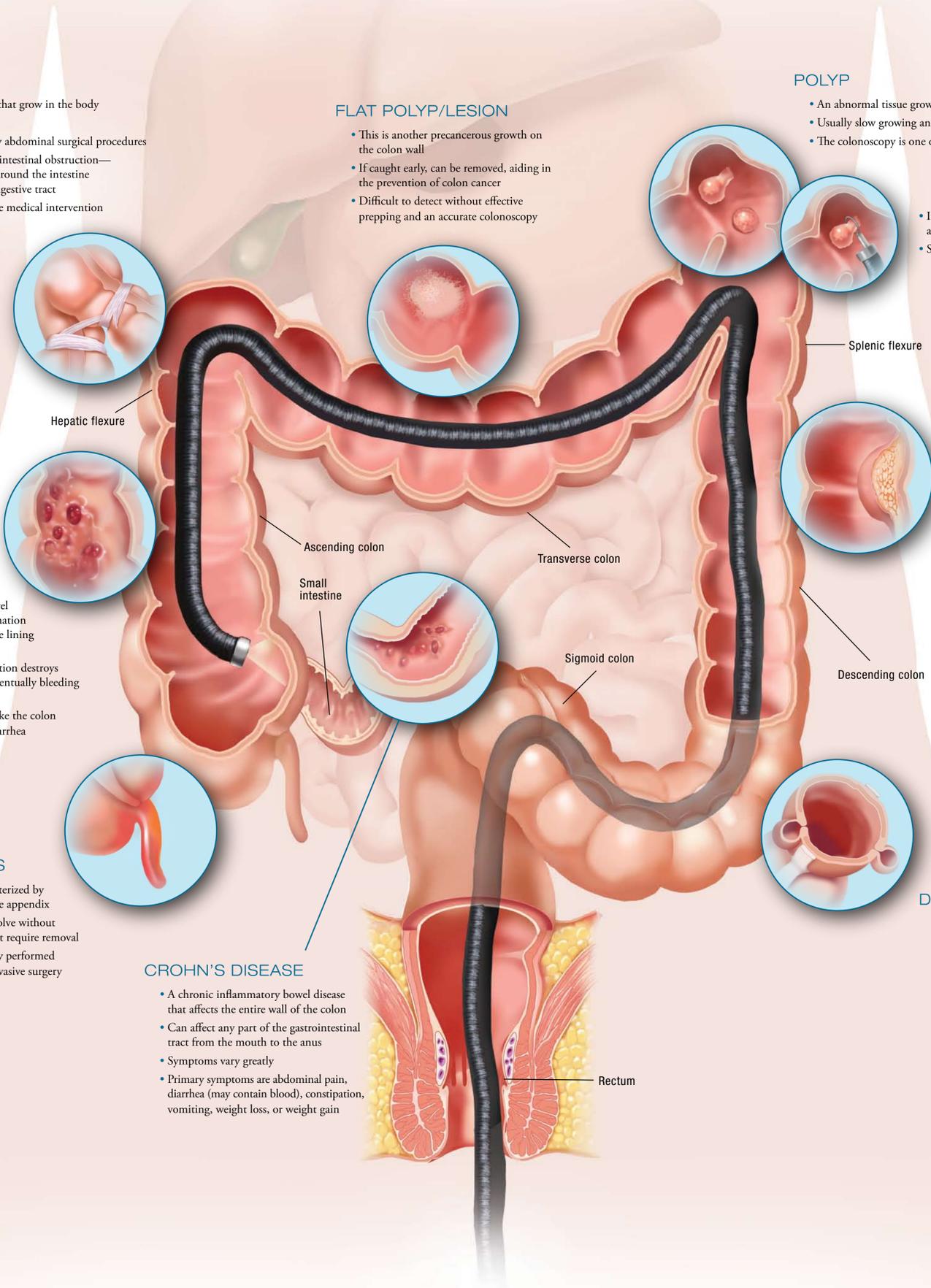
- A chronic inflammatory bowel disease that affects the entire wall of the colon
- Can affect any part of the gastrointestinal tract from the mouth to the anus
- Symptoms vary greatly
- Primary symptoms are abdominal pain, diarrhea (may contain blood), constipation, vomiting, weight loss, or weight gain

CANCER

- If polyps or lesions are left undetected, they can develop into cancer
- Generally, polyps grow very slowly
- Early detection and removal is essential to cancer prevention
- Colonoscopy is the key to early detection and prevention

DIVERTICULITIS

- Involves the formation of pouches (diverticula) on the outside of the colon
- Results when pouches become inflamed or infected due to blockage, possibly by feces or food particles
- Symptoms may include abdominal pain, fever, nausea, vomiting, chills, cramping, and constipation



Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States.²

- 148,000 new cases diagnosed per year³
- 55,000 deaths per year³

Talk to your doctor about scheduling a colonoscopy.

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Colonoscopy photo courtesy of Olympus*

References: 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Colorectal cancer screening rates. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/statistics/screening_rates.htm. Accessed April 12, 2007. 2. Foundation for Digestive Health and Nutrition. Colorectal cancer fact sheet. Available at: <http://www.fidhn.org/wmspage.cfm?parm1=210>. Accessed April 12, 2007. 3. Cancer stat fact sheets: cancer of the colon and rectum. Available at: http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/colorect_print.html. Accessed April 12, 2007.

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