

## Contact information

### St. Maarten Medical Center

#### Endoscopy Department

Welgelegen Road 30

Cay Hill

St. Maarten

Tel: +1 (721) 543-1111 ext 1311

Speed dial: 741

Fax: + 1 (721) 543-0116

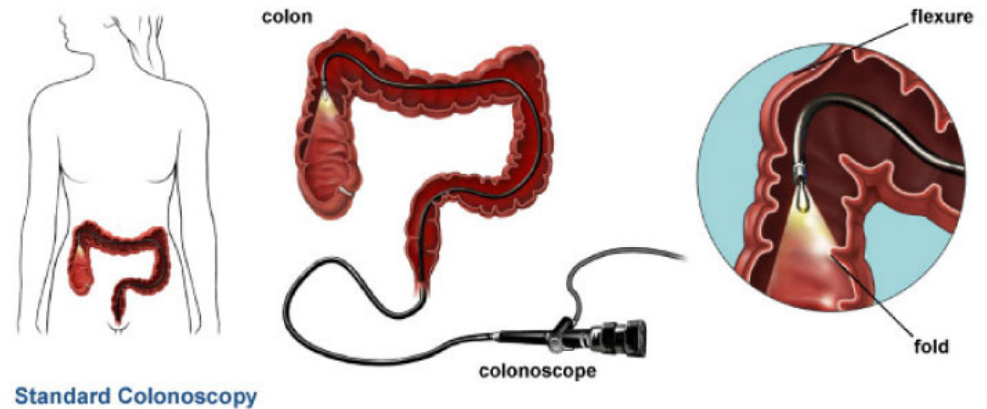
Email: [info@sxmmc.org](mailto:info@sxmmc.org)

Web: [www.smmc.sx](http://www.smmc.sx)

*Our goal is to be clear and understandable to you regarding your care. We hope that you never hesitate to ask questions during or about your treatment, even after you have returned to your home. If you still have questions, concerns or need any extra information, please feel free to address your question to any of our staff in the Endoscopy Department*

A publication of SMMC - October 2013

# Colonoscopy



**SAFETY**  
**HEALTH**  
**SATISFACTION**

*The pillars defining our quality care*

# We Care!

**S** | **M**  
**M** | **C**

St. Maarten Medical Center

## What is colonoscopy ?

Colonoscopy is a procedure used to see inside the colon and rectum. Unlike sigmoid scope, which examines only the lower third of the colon, colonoscopy examines the entire length of the colon.

### Why the test is performed?

- ◆ To evaluate unexplained anemia.
- ◆ To detect inflamed tissue, ulcers, and abnormal growths.
- ◆ The procedure is used to look for early signs of colorectal cancer.
- ◆ To diagnose unexplained changes in bowel habits, abdominal pain, bleeding from the anus, and unexplained weight loss.

### How do I prepare for the test?

- ◆ The doctor provides written instructions how to prepare; this is called a bowel prep. Generally, all solids must be emptied from the gastrointestinal tract by following a clear liquid diet.
- ◆ A laxative is needed the night before the test and the following morning.
- ◆ Patients should inform the doctor of all medical conditions and medications, vitamins or supplements taken regularly, including:
  - Aspirin
  - Arthritis medications
  - Blood thinners.
  - Diabetes medications
  - Vitamins that contain iron.

### How will the test feel?

The sedative and pain medication will provide relaxation and produce a drowsy feeling.

You may feel pressure as the scope moves inside. Brief cramping and gas pains may be felt as air is inserted or as the scope advances. The passing of gas is necessary and should be expected.

Mild abdominal cramping and considerable passing of gas may occur after the exam.

## How is the test performed?

- ◆ During the procedure, the patient lie on his/her left side on the examination table. In most cases, a light sedative and pain medication, helps keep the patient relaxed.
- ◆ The doctor and assisting staff monitor vital signs and try to make the patient as comfortable as possible.
- ◆ The doctor inserts a long, flexible, lighted tube (a colonoscope) into the anus and slowly guides it through the rectum and into the colon. Air can be inserted to inflate the large intestine to give the doctor a better view. A small camera mounted in the scope transmits a video image from inside the large intestine to a computer screen, allowing the doctor to carefully examine the intestinal lining. The doctor may ask the patient to move periodically so the scope can be adjusted for better viewing.
- ◆ Once the scope has reached the opening to the small intestine, it is slowly withdrawn and the lining of the large intestine is carefully examined again.

### Removal of Polyps and Biopsy:

The doctor can remove growths, called polyps, and/or tissue samples during colonoscopy and send to the laboratory for testing on signs of cancer and other abnormalities. The procedure, called a biopsy.

### Patients who develop any of these signs after the procedure should contact their doctor immediately:

- ◆ Severe abdominal pain
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Bloody bowel movements
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Weakness

The patient must have someone to take him/her home after the procedure, as they will be woozy and unable to drive.