

Colonoscopy (endoscopic examination of the colon and rectum)

A colonoscopy is an endoscopic examination of the colon and rectum. The endoscope is a long, thin, flexible tube with a camera inside, which is inserted into your rectum. The entire colon is carefully inspected, and through the endoscope, the doctor or nurse can take tissue samples (biopsies) and remove polyps.

The colonoscopy typically takes between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

Getting ready for a colonoscopy

Before a colonoscopy, your bowels must be emptied entirely. So, you will have to take a laxative called Plenvu®, which you will either receive in the post or collect from the pharmacy with the prescription you have received via e-Boks. Please follow the instructions in this letter, and **not** the instructions included in the Plenvu® package.

5 days before the colonoscopy

Stop taking fish oil and iron tablets, including herbal medicines or supplements containing high levels of iron. Avoid eating fruit, vegetables, and bread containing seeds and kernels. Avoid flaxseeds, sesame seeds, poppy seeds, sunflower seeds, rye kernels, and nuts.

Also, avoid kiwi, strawberries, raspberries, figs, grapes, citrus fruits, tomatoes, and other fruits containing small seeds.

The day before the colonoscopy

Do not eat or drink milk or plant-based products, including cheese, butter, and yoghurt. After 6 p.m., you should only drink clear fluids: water, non-alcoholic drinks, squash, seedless juice, soda, coffee, tea, and broth.

Bowel cleansing with the Plenvu® laxative the day before the colonoscopy

At 6 p.m. the evening before the colonoscopy, you need to drink Plenvu® dose 1:

- Pour the contents of the Plenvu® dose 1 into a jug or container.
- Add ½ litre of cold water.
- Stir until the powder has dissolved; this may take up to 8 minutes.
- Drink dose 1 slowly over 30 to 60 minutes.
- Also drink an additional ½ litre of other clear fluids during the evening (but no dairy products).

Within 1–3 hours, you will experience diarrhoea. Some people also feel nauseous or need to vomit. Make sure to be near the toilet after starting to drink the laxative.

On the day of the colonoscopy, 4 hours before the procedure

You must continue fasting, i.e. you'll need to stop eating. Four hours before the colonoscopy, you must drink Plenvu® dose 2 (2 sachets):

- Pour the contents of the two sachets of Plenvu® dose 2 into a jug or container.
- Add ½ litre of cold water.
- Stir until the mixture has dissolved. This may take up to 8 minutes.
- Drink dose 2 slowly over 30 to 60 minutes.
- Also drink an additional ½ litre of water or other clear fluids (but no dairy products).

Do not drink any liquids two hours before the colonoscopy, and do not smoke or chew gum.

What happens during the colonoscopy?

If you need sedation or pain relief, you will be given medicine through a small tube in your arm. Air is pumped into your bowel to open it, which may cause you to feel bloated or as though you need to go to the toilet. You may experience discomfort as the bowel stretches.

The endoscope is inserted into your rectum and advanced around the entire colon. Some parts of the bowel may be challenging to pass, which can cause temporary discomfort and pain. However, taking biopsies or removing polyps does not cause pain.

After the colonoscopy

If you have been given sedatives or pain relief, you may need to rest for a while before going home. You must not drive or operate machinery for the following 24 hours. Consider asking a friend or family member to fetch you.

What does the colonoscopy show?

Before you leave, the nurse or doctor will explain the results of the colonoscopy. If biopsies were taken or polyps removed, you will be told when to expect the results.

Be aware of symptoms in the 24 hours following the colonoscopy

Air is pumped into the bowel during the colonoscopy, and this may cause some discomfort afterwards. If polyps were removed or biopsies were taken, there may be some bleeding from your bottom for a couple of days.

Call the hospital where the colonoscopy was performed, if you experience any of these symptoms within the following 24 hours:

- Severe stomach pain
- A high temperature, i.e. 38°C or higher
- Chills
- Ongoing bleeding from your bottom

Questions and contact

If you have any questions, you can call the Bowel Cancer Screening Secretariat in your region.

With best regards,

The screening secretariat in the North Denmark Region, tel.: 97 64 17 12

The screening secretariat in the Central Denmark Region, tel.: 78 42 01 70

The screening secretariat in the Region of Southern Denmark, tel.: 79 40 67 85

The screening secretariat in Region Zealand, tel.: 56 51 28 28

The screening secretariat in the Capital Region of Denmark, tel.: 38 67 17 17

