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## Purpose

Colonoscopy is the direct examination of the large intestine using a flexible fiber optic tube inserted through the anus. It is used to detect inflammatory or ulcerative bowel disease, to check for polyps or tumors, or to locate the site of gastrointestinal bleeding.

## What is involved?

This procedure takes 30-60 minutes and is usually done in the hospital as an outpatient. The patient is given sedation and is then placed on his/her side, knees flexed. The doctor first inserts a gloved finger into the anus and then passes the colonoscope through the intestine. Air may be injected to expand the folds of the colon, enabling the doctor to see the entire surface area. When the tube has reached the entire length of the colon, it is slowly withdrawn as the doctor examines the mucous lining for any lesions or polyps. Special attachments allow the removal of some polyps or the collection of a biopsy sample.