A simple way to detect & prevent colon cancer

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is recommended to screen for colon cancer. A small flexible camera is used to visualize the large intestine, also known as the colon. This procedure is usually performed on an out-patient basis, meaning you will likely go home the same day.

Who needs a colonoscopy and why is it so important?

Everyone over the age of 50 should be screened for colon cancer. If you have a close family relative with colon cancer, you need to be screened earlier.

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the US. With early detection and treatment, it is very curable.

Rectal bleeding at any age is always a concern. Many people blame hemorrhoids, when in fact, colon cancers may bleed also. If you have problems with rectal bleeding or if your bowel habits have changed, you should consult your physician about having a colonoscopy.

EARLY DETECTION OF COLON CANCER CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE. GET SCREENED!

What does it involve?

Because the colon is a digestive organ, it needs to be free from digestive products prior to your examination. This is done by using special laxatives prescribed by Dr. Huntwork and drinking only liquids to clean your colon the day before. Special considerations are also taken for patients who take blood pressure, diabetes and blood thinning medications.

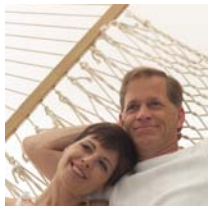
The morning of your procedure, you will arrive at the hospital where staff will check you in, admit you to your room, review your medical history, check your blood pressure and other vital signs, and establish intravenous access. We will use this access to give you medications to keep you very comfortable during your procedure.

You will be taken to our procedure room where we will make preparations to closely monitor your heart activity, blood pressure and oxygen levels. When you are very relaxed and nearly asleep, Dr. Huntwork will do a rectal examination and then introduce the camera to see inside your colon.

Air is gently used to slowly open the colon, which is normally collapsed flat. Any polyps (finger-like projections) will be removed and tested for cancer. Pictures of your intestines will be taken for you and Dr. Huntwork. The procedure usually takes 20 to 40 minutes, depending on how many polyps are removed. Afterwards, you will return to your room where you will be given something to eat and drink. You will leave the hospital after a short time with someone who will drive you home.

How will I feel afterward?

Physically, patients generally feel sleepy due to the relaxation medication and may have some mild gas discomfort from the air that is left in the colon.



You may return to your normal diet and you are encouraged to drink plenty of fluids. Because of the special medications used, you should not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours.

What are the risks?

Bleeding. Blood thinners are stopped for five to seven days prior to minimize bleeding. Bleeding can occur from the removal of a polyp; however, they are usually the size of the tip of a pen, so most people stop bleeding immediately.

Anesthesia. There is low risk of heart or lung problems since you are breathing on your own. We watch your heart, lungs, blood pressure and oxygen levels closely throughout. If you have severe heart or lung disease, your physician will evaluate your risk beforehand.

Rupture of colon. The colon is very thin like the fabric of your shirt. If biopsies are taken or polyps are removed, it is done carefully so as not to perforate the colon. Dr. Huntwork skillfully navigates the colon with minimal discomfort and maximum care.

Meet Deanna Huntwork, DO

Dr. Huntwork has been practicing at Lincoln Hospital since 1995 and has built a solid reputation as a quality surgeon who listens to the needs and concerns of her patients.

A native of Great Falls, Montana, Dr. Huntwork earned her way through medical school as a Radiology Tech. Impressed with the holistic healing philosophy behind Osteopathic medicine, Dr. Huntwork enrolled in the University of Health Sciences of Kansas City. Osteopaths, such as Dr. Huntwork, are responsible for all the same academic disciplines as their MD colleagues, plus receive over 300 hours of intensive training with the musculoskeletal system. This training gives them a highly developed sense of touch, which is a powerful diagnostic tool.

Dr. Huntwork is a Board Certified General Surgeon who specializes in abdominal and gynecological surgery. She is a Fellow in the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons and is well published. To find out more about her or her dynamic practice, log on to **www.lincolnhospital.org** and click on **Physicians** or log on to her website **www.spikelight.com.**

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Neighbors for Life

Get the facts about Colonoscopy

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