

Endoscopy Information

Colonoscopy: Procedure & Potential Risks

A **colonoscopy** is a procedure that allows a doctor to examine the inside of the large intestine (colon) using a flexible tube with a camera. It is commonly performed to screen for colorectal cancer, investigate symptoms like bleeding or changes in bowel habits, and remove polyps. The procedure typically takes about 30 minutes and is done under sedation for comfort.

While generally safe, potential complications include:

- **Abdominal discomfort or bloating** (temporary and common, affecting many patients but usually resolving within hours)
- **Bleeding** (especially if a biopsy or polyp removal is performed) – occurs in about 1 in 400 cases, though usually minor and self-limited
- **Perforation** (a tear in the colon wall, which may require surgery) – occurs in approximately 1 in 2,000 to 1 in 3,000 cases
- **Adverse reactions to sedation** (such as breathing or heart problems) – very rare, occurring in about 1 in 10,000 cases

Most patients recover quickly and can resume normal activities the same day.

Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD, aka “gastroscopy”): Procedure & Potential Risks

An EGD is a procedure that allows a doctor to examine the esophagus, stomach, and the first part of the small intestine (duodenum) using a flexible tube with a camera. It is commonly performed to investigate symptoms such as heartburn, difficulty swallowing, bleeding, or unexplained abdominal pain. The procedure typically takes 5-10 minutes and is done under sedation for comfort.

While generally safe, potential complications include:

- **Sore throat, bloating, or mild discomfort** (common and usually resolves within hours)
- **Bleeding** (especially if a biopsy or treatment is performed) – occurs in about 1 in 1,000 to 1 in 10,000 cases
- **Perforation** (a tear in the esophagus, stomach, or duodenum, which may require surgery) – occurs in approximately 1 in 5,000 to 1 in 10,000 cases
- **Adverse reactions to sedation** (such as breathing or heart problems) – very rare, occurring in about 1 in 10,000 cases

Most patients recover quickly and can resume normal activities the same day.

If you have further questions about either procedure, please book a consultation appointment with Dr. Liu Hennessey prior to your endoscopy procedure.