

Getting Ready for a Computed Tomography (CT) Virtual Colonoscopy

QEII Health Sciences Centre

Dartmouth General Hospital

Cobequid Community Health Centre

Getting Ready for a CT Virtual Colonoscopy

What is a CT virtual colonoscopy?

A virtual colonoscopy (VC) is a test used to check the inside lining of the colon (large bowel) for growths called polyps. It is also called a computerized tomography (CT) colonography or CTC.

A machine called a CT scanner takes X-ray images (pictures) of the lining of your colon. It puts all of the images together to make one image. This shows the doctor all of your colon and parts of your belly and pelvis.

How do I get ready for a CT VC?

To get ready for this test, you must clean your colon. Pick up the items on the following pages and follow the instructions to make sure your bowel is properly cleaned for the test.

3 or more days before the test:

- Pick up a preparation kit at the **Radiology Department, X-ray reception desk** at one of these sites:
 - › QEII (Halifax Infirmary site), third floor
 - › QEII (Victoria General site), third floor
 - › Dartmouth General Hospital, main floor
 - › Cobequid Community Health Centre, second floor

You can come anytime between:

- › 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday to Friday
- The preparation kit includes:
 - › 450 ml Readi-Cat® 2 barium sulfate
 - › 60 ml Gastrografin®

Note: These should both be stored at room temperature.

2 days before the test:

- Buy 1 box of Pico-Salax® from a pharmacy.

Note: You may have to ask the pharmacist for this, but you **do not** need a prescription.

- **Follow the instructions in the preparation kit very carefully.** This will help to prevent discomfort while cleaning your bowel.
- Stool (poop) left in your bowel can hide serious conditions. If your bowel is not completely clean, the test may have to be done again.
- **If you have any questions about the instructions, call your primary health care provider or the Diagnostic Imaging Department where your test is scheduled.**
- Most medications can be taken as usual.
- **If you have diabetes,** ask your primary health care provider how to take your medication(s) on the day of the test. For example, your regular insulin dose on the morning of the test may be cut in half, or you may be told to hold off on taking pills by mouth until after the test. Check your blood sugar levels regularly.

What will happen during the test?

- The test will take about 15 minutes.
- You will not need any medication for pain or to make you comfortable.
- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown.
- You will be taken to an exam room and asked to lie on an exam table.
- The CT technologist will put a small, flexible tube a short way up your rectum (bum). This will feel a bit like having a digital rectal exam (prostate exam).
- They will slowly pump air into your colon.
- The test should not be painful. During the test, you may have:
 - › Belly fullness
 - › Discomfort
 - › Cramping
 - › The urge to go to the bathroom (poop)

These feelings will go away as soon as the test is over.

- Images of your belly and pelvis will be taken while you are lying on your back and then on your stomach. Images may also be taken while you are lying on your side. While the images are being taken, you will be asked to hold your breath for about 10 seconds.

What are your questions? Please ask. We are here to help you.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.