



Frequently Asked Questions Virtual Colonoscopy

What is Virtual colonoscopy?

- **Also called a Colonography, it is a CT examination that captures a 3D picture of the colon.** It is very effective in detecting most polyps and can be used for colon cancer screening in place of a regular colonoscopy. It is recommended by the American Cancer Society as one of the alternative tests for colon cancer screening.

What are the advantages of virtual colonoscopy?

- This is a 30 minute outpatient procedure in which **you do not have to take any time off from work.** In fact, you may return to work immediately after the procedure.
- **There is no sedation given. This helps reduce the time of your visit and enables you to drive yourself to and from your procedure.** No scope is advanced into the colon. A small tube will be placed for a few minutes to inflate the colon with carbon dioxide. We use carbon dioxide rather than air because it quickly evaporates and is expelled, resulting in much less discomfort.
- It is suitable for those people who do not want colonoscopy under any circumstances.

What are the disadvantages?

- It is only a diagnostic test and it does not **remove any polyps.**
- A separate procedure with a **colonoscopy will be required later** to remove the polyps if any are found.
- It **may be uncomfortable** because inflating the colon can cause cramping in some people.
- You are exposed to **additional radiation**, the significance of which is not known at this time.
- It is usually not covered by insurance. The self-pay rate is typically \$1,200.

A regular colonoscopy is the gold standard and best test for most people to utilize for colon cancer screening. However, virtual colonoscopy may be preferable for individuals who are considered "high risk" for undergoing a sedated procedure.