PROCEDURE INFORMATION

COLONOSCOPY TECHNIQUE
A colonoscope is a fiberoptic flexible scope that is inserted in the rectum after the patient is sedated. The scope is about the size of your finger and has a light source at the end so that the physician can visualize the lining of the entire large intestine, from the rectum to the cecum (where the appendix and small bowel attach to the large bowel). Factors affecting visibility of the entire lining include the presence of stool and the patient’s anatomy: a fold, kink or adhesions that would prevent the physician from advancing the scope to the end of the colon.

COLONOSCOPY RISKS
Because it is an invasive procedure, risks are involved. Risks are very rare, but must be given so that you can make an informed consent for the procedure.

1. The most common side effects are cramping pain and abdominal swelling, caused by the air used to inflate the colon during the procedure. This air is expelled shortly after the procedure, and these symptoms generally go away.
2. If a biopsy is performed during the procedure, you may also note a small amount of the blood in the bowel movements after the examination. If you note more than one tablespoon of bleeding on two or more occasions, please call the office, as it may be necessary to be re-scoped to have the area cauterized.
3. Though rare, there is the potential for the colonoscope to injure the intestinal wall (causing a perforation or injury to other structures adjacent to the colon), infection or bleeding.
4. Although this test is very helpful in finding the cause of many digestive diseases, abnormalities can go undetected at times. Factors that can affect this include the completeness of your bowel preparation before the procedure and your anatomy.
5. When this test is performed, you will be given sedation medications to make the procedure more comfortable. Whenever a medication is given, a risk of allergic reaction or side effect of the medication itself is possible. These IV medications are given under medical supervision. You will be monitored during the procedure to lessen the risk of medication related complications.

UPPER ENDOSCOPY RISKS
Because it is an invasive procedure, risks are involved. Risks are rare, but must be given, so that you can make an informed consent for the procedure.

1. The most common side effect is a temporary, mild throat irritation that sometimes occurs after the procedure.
2. Serious risks with upper GI endoscopy, however, are very uncommon.
   a. Excessive bleeding, especially after the removal of a large polyp.
   b. In extremely rare instances, a perforation or tear in the esophagus or stomach wall can occur. This complication may require hospitalization and, rarely surgery.
   c. Quite uncommonly, a diagnostic error or oversight may occur.
   d. Due to mild sedation, the patient should not drive or operate machinery following the procedure. For this reason, someone else must drive the patient home.

Additional Questions?
If you have further questions or concerns regarding any of the information contained within this letter or if you need to cancel your appointment, please contact the department at which your appointment was scheduled.

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