

The Bottom Line

Vaughan Endoscopy Clinic (VEC) is a **state of the art** out-of-hospital endoscopy clinic providing **Screening colonoscopy and endoscopy** for the work up of mild gastrointestinal disorders. It is staffed by gastroenterologists.

In addition to the endoscopic services, they will provide all the necessary **GI follow-up** and make all the appropriate referrals required due to findings at the endoscopy.

The Medical Director has been an active participant at the CPSO in the development of **standards for out-of-hospital clinics**, all of which VEC adheres to.

Gastroenterologists:

Dr. William Appell
Dr. David Ford
Dr. Michael Gould
Dr. Susan Greenbloom
Dr. David Kreaden
Dr. Eric Leong
Dr. Michael Ostro
Dr. Ted Ptak
Dr. Jonathon Springer
Dr. Rajiv Sethi
Dr. Stephen Sinclair

In addition to high quality and convenient access to endoscopy, the doctors at VEC will provide supplemental practical GI advice through this periodic newsletter. This article is written by Dr. Michael Gould (a gastroenterologist from Etobicoke General Hospital)

How to Improve Your Colonoscopy Experience

Colonoscopy is considered one of the most effective cancer screening methods. In addition, colonoscopy saves lives by detecting and removing precancerous polyps in the colon before they can become malignant. The endoscopist uses a video camera on a long flexible scope designed to pass through the large intestine (colon) looking for abnormalities. Here are some steps to improve your colonoscopy experience and to ensure the most safe and effective examination.

Follow the Bowel Preparation Instructions Carefully:

Your colon must be completely cleansed so that a thorough examination can be done. Follow the instructions given to you by the clinic.

- Two days before your colonoscopy do not eat any foods that are high in fiber and stop all fiber supplements. For example, do not eat brown bread, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, bran, flaxseed, lentils, beans or raw vegetables. Do not eat foods with corn kernels, nuts, or fruits with seeds.
- Follow the dietary restrictions that start the day before your procedure. Drink clear fluids only or foods that you can see through (Jell-O or clear broth). Do not have any solid foods or foods that you cannot see through (such as milk, coffee/tea if containing milk or cream, orange juice with pulp, etc.). Examples of clear fluids are water, apple juice, white grape juice, gingerale, soda water, and sports drinks like Gatorade.
- Sports drinks are strongly recommended because they contain electrolytes with will prevent dehydration and light headedness during this time of dietary restrictions. Please avoid red, orange and purple drinks because the dyes can look like blood in your colon.
- Take the bowel preparation medication as instructed by the clinic. This medication will be started the day before your procedure.



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Once you have done your bowel preparation, in total you should have taken 4 to 6 litres (yes litres not cups!) more than your usual fluid intake. This will increase the quality of the bowel preparation and will decrease the risk of dehydration. It will also make you feel less hungry.

- Stop drinking any fluids, even water, 2 hours before your test. Since you will be undergoing anesthesia it is important that your stomach is empty during the test to prevent aspiration.

While the bowel preparation is likely the most difficult part of the entire process, it is very important. The cleaner your bowel is the faster, safer, and more accurate the test will be. The bowel preparation will cause you to have frequent watery bowel movements. If you have been drinking enough you will be passing clear liquid stools (may be pale yellow). Ideally it will look like urine.

Medications are Important to Know:

During the procedure sedation is provided to minimize any discomfort you might have. Some medications can affect sedation thus it is important to inform the clinic of all prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and “recreational drug” usage. For example, sleeping pills, anxiety medication, marijuana use and narcotics all need to be known in order to provide the correct anesthesia dose. Alcohol consumption is another important factor. You should disclose this information to the nurse or doctor prior to the procedure.

- When booking the appointment, provide the clinic with a list of all medications that you take (drug name, dose and frequency). If uncertain, bring the actual pill bottles to your appointment so that the medications can be documented and we can ensure that there are no issues.
- Aspirin is a blood thinner and thus can increase the risk of bleeding if a polyp is removed. It is important to stop taking aspirin 5 days before the test. Patients on other blood thinners should notify the clinic before scheduling the appointment.
- Make sure that you take all your prescribed medications, especially your blood pressure pills, on the morning of the test, with small sips of water.
- Due to the sedation given during the procedure your judgment and reflexes may be impaired for the rest of the day. You are not allowed to drive or operate machinery for 12 hours post sedation.

Medical History Must be Provided:

It is important for the physician to know your medical history. For example, a condition called sleep apnea requires close monitoring during sedation. Another example is that a family history of colonic polyps or colon cancer will affect how frequently you should undergo screening colonoscopy.

The bottom line is:

Like screening for breast, cervical, and prostate cancer, colon cancer screening is necessary and saves lives. Some abnormalities or polyps might be missed if your bowel is not cleaned properly prior to the test. Thus it is extremely important to follow the instructions provided by the clinic or your test will need to be repeated. As well, in order to ensure the best possible patient care, please declare all medication usage and medical history information when booking the appointment.

Our newsletters are posted on our website (www.vaughanendoscopy.com).

Other GI topics of interest are published periodically.