Your physician has recommended that you have a medical procedure called a screening colonoscopy. This guide will help you to understand what the procedure is and what you can expect before, during and after.
What is a colonoscopy?
A colonoscopy is an outpatient procedure that is used to detect changes or abnormalities in the large intestine (colon) and rectum. Your physician may order a colonoscopy to:

1. Evaluate gastrointestinal symptoms, such as rectal and intestinal bleeding, abdominal pain, changes in bowel habits, and unexplained weight loss.
2. Screen an individual for colorectal polyps or precancerous growths.

Preparing for your colonoscopy
Before your colonoscopy, the bowel must be clean so that there is a clear view of your colon. Your physician will provide you with instructions to follow for your bowel prep. If you feel nauseated or vomit while taking the bowel prep, wait 30 minutes before drinking more fluid and then start with small sips of the solution. If the nausea still persists, please contact our office at 330.287.2595.

You may experience skin irritation around the anus due to the passage of liquid stools. In order to prevent and to treat skin irritation, you can do the following:

- Apply Vaseline to the skin around the anus before drinking the bowel prep.
- Sit in a bathtub filled with warm water for 10 to 15 minutes after you finish passing a stool. After soaking, blot the skin dry with a soft cloth then apply Vaseline to the anal area, and place a cotton ball just outside the anus to absorb leaking fluid.

Your physician will notify you of the medications that are safe for you to take on the day of your procedure.

During your colonoscopy
You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and remove your glasses. Pain medicine and a sedative can be administered to you through an IV. These medicines will help you to relax and feel sleepy during the test. Your doctor will determine the specific anesthesia used during the procedure.

You will be asked to lie on your left side with your knees pulled up towards your chest. Your physician will use a colonoscope - a thin, flexible tube to view your colon. The colonoscope will be inserted into the rectum and advanced through the colon. The scope uses a small amount of air to inflate the colon so the lining of the colon can be examined. You may feel the need to have a bowel movement or experience mild cramping during the procedure. The colonoscope has a tiny video camera that sends images of the lining of your colon to an external monitor so your physician can examine your colon. While the colonoscope is still in place, your physician can insert instruments to take tissue samples (biopsy) or remove polyps or other abnormal tissue, if indicated. When the procedure is complete, the scope is removed. The procedure typically takes about 20 minutes to an hour. Plan to be at the hospital for 2-3 hours from arrival time.

After your colonoscopy
You will be in recovery for observation until you are ready to be discharged. You must have a family member or friend take you home. Do not drive or return to work after you are discharged. Plan to rest for the remainder of the day after your colonoscopy. You may feel bloated or pass gas for a few hours after the procedure as you clear the air from your colon.

If you had a biopsy or a polyp removed, you may have some light rectal bleeding for 1-2 days after the procedure.

Call your physician immediately, if you experience any of the following:

- Heavy rectal bleeding
- Severe belly pain
- A fever
- Dizziness
- Vomiting
- A swollen and firm belly