Virtual Colonoscopy

Virtual colonoscopy (VC) is an imaging test that looks for cancer, polyps, or other disease in the large intestine (colon). The medical name of this test is CT colonography.

How the Test is Performed

VC is different from regular colonoscopy. Regular colonoscopy uses a long, lighted tool called a colonoscope that is inserted into the rectum and large intestine.

VC is done at centers like InHealth Imaging, that have the appropriate type of equipment such as a MRI or CT. No sedatives are needed and no colonoscope is used.

The exam is done as follows:

- You lie on your left side on a narrow table that is connected to an MRI or CT machine.
- Your knees are drawn up toward your chest.
- A small, flexible tube is inserted into the rectum. Air is pumped through the tube to make the colon bigger and easier to see.
- You then lie on your back.
- The table slides into a large tunnel in the CT or MRI machine and scans of your colon are taken.
- Scans are also taken while you lie on your stomach.
- You must stay very still during this procedure, since movement can blur the scans. You may be asked to hold your breath briefly while each a scan is done.

A computer combines all the images to form three-dimensional pictures of the colon. The doctor can then view the images on a video monitor.