

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO COLONOSCOPY?

1. Virtual Colonoscopy or Barium Enema.

Colonoscopy is more accurate in detecting lesions than a barium enema or a virtual colonoscopy. If a lesion is detected with these techniques a colonoscopy is still necessary. Virtual colonoscopy currently can miss up to 10-30% of significant polyps. No samples can be taken with these techniques. Virtual colonoscopy involves the same bowel prep as a colonoscopy and if any lesions are found, you will require a repeat full preparation prior to the colonoscopy procedure. Due to significant air placed in the bowel, half the patients find virtual colonoscopy uncomfortable.

2. Faecal Occult Blood Testing.

This is a useful screening test for colorectal cancer. However, on its own it only detects approximately 30% of bowel cancer. If this test is positive, then you will need a colonoscopy. If you have symptoms of bowel disorder, then this test is not the appropriate test.

3. Capsule Colonoscopy.

This capsule is still in a research mode and requires larger amounts of preparation.

4. CT scan, MRI scan.

This is excellent for detecting pathology within the abdomen predominantly involving the solid organs such as liver, spleen, and pancreas. It is not good for detection of polyps. It can be useful for detection of diverticulitis.