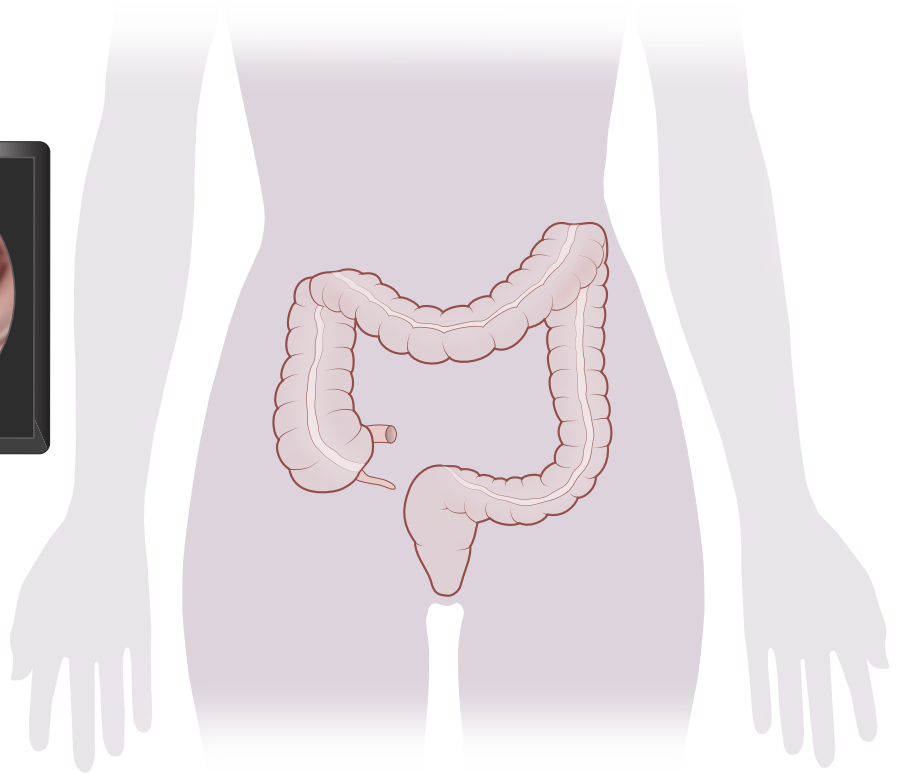


Preparing for your Colonoscopy

A patient friendly booklet for:



This booklet will help you understand and prepare for your colonoscopy. Please take your time to read it.

Centre universitaire
de santé McGill



McGill University
Health Centre

This document was developed by the staff of the Endoscopy Unit of the MUHC.

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IMPORTANT

Information provided in this booklet is only for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a healthcare practitioner (doctor, nurse, other), or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.

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McGill University
Health Centre

**Bureau d'éducation des patients
Patient Education Office**



This material is also available on the website
of the MUHC Patient Education Office
(www.muhcpatienteducation.ca)

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Introduction

In this booklet you will find information about your colonoscopy and how to prepare for your test. Being well prepared is the key to having a successful test.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test to see inside of your colon (large bowel). Your doctor will use a colonoscope, a flexible tube about as thick as, i.e., your finger, with a small camera at the end. The colonoscope is put in your rectum and passed to the end of your large bowel. The camera will show images of your colon on a monitor.

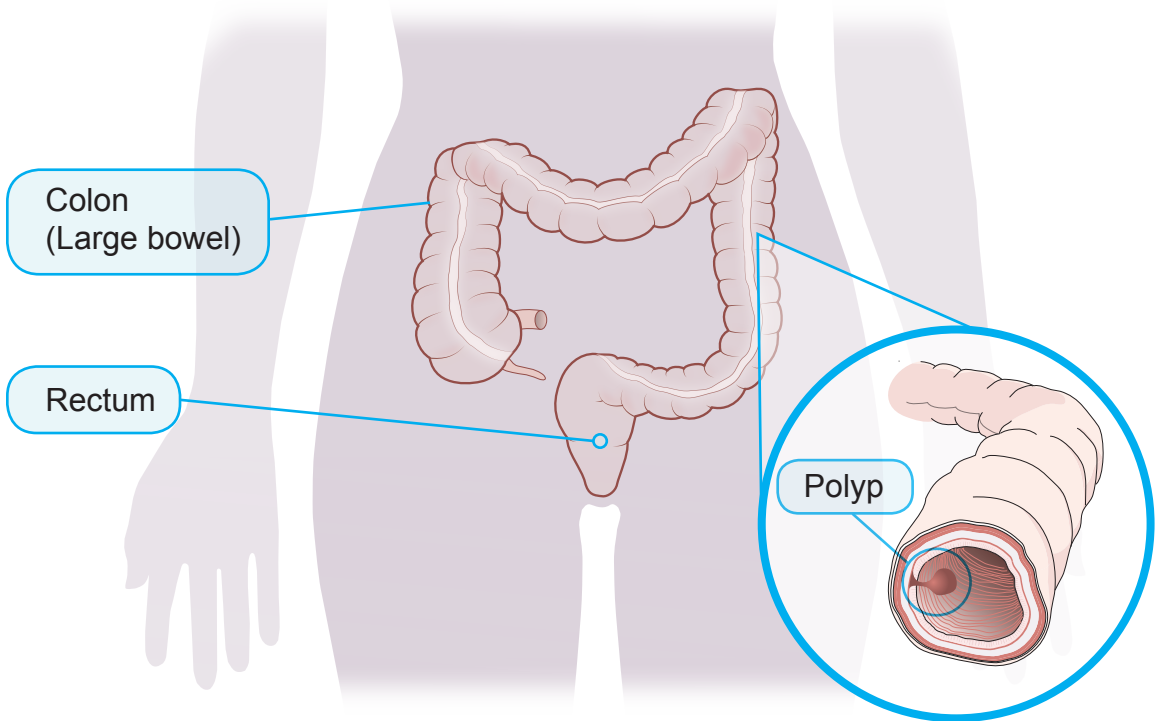


Why is a colonoscopy recommended?

A colonoscopy may be recommended for different reasons.

For example, your doctor may recommend this test if you have:

- Abdominal pain
- Blood in your stool
- Changes in your stool habits
- Bowel inflammation
- Polyps that need to be removed



Many colonoscopies are done to check for colon cancer. Colon cancer usually starts from a polyp. A polyp is a wart-like growth of cells. Although most polyps are benign (not cancerous) removing them is an important way to prevent colon and rectal cancer. The procedure to remove polyps is called a polypectomy. When a polyp is removed, a sample of it is sent to the lab for testing. The results will be given to your doctor.

A colonoscopy is the only test that can remove polyps and take a sample of the tissue, called a biopsy.

The other tests to check for colon cancer are :

- **Stool tests:** Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) and fecal DNA. These tests are used to find blood in your stool.
- **Virtual colonoscopy:** Scan of your colon. This exam also involves a bowel preparation.

What are the potential side effects and complications of a colonoscopy?

Before your colonoscopy, your doctor will explain the possible side effects and complications of a colonoscopy.

Here are some common side effects after a colonoscopy:

- Abdominal pain
- Bloating
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache
- Small amount of blood in the stools for 1-2 days
- Rectal or anal irritation
- Irritation where you received the injection in your vein

Rare complications after a colonoscopy are:

- **Bowel perforation**

A bowel perforation is a hole in the wall of your colon or intestine. If this happens, you will get intravenous antibiotics. You may also have a surgery. The risk of perforation is extremely low. This risk may be a bit higher if a polypectomy is performed.

- **Heavy bleeding**

Heavy bleeding may happen after a biopsy and/or a polyp is removed. The bleeding can be controlled. In some cases, you may need a blood transfusion. You may also have to repeat your colonoscopy. The risk of bleeding is extremely low. This risk may be a bit higher if a polypectomy is performed.

- **Allergic reaction to the medication**

If this happens, we will give you medication to stop the reaction.



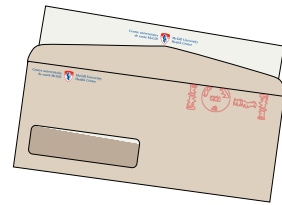
What happens a few weeks before your test?

You will get a phone call.

We will tell you:

- The date and time of your colonoscopy
- Where to go
- Instructions for your medication, if needed
- How to prepare your colon for your colonoscopy

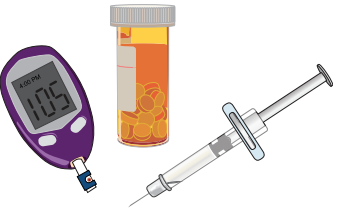


This information above will also be sent to you by email or by mail.



We will ask you questions about:

- Your general health
- Your medications that you are taking

You must tell us if:

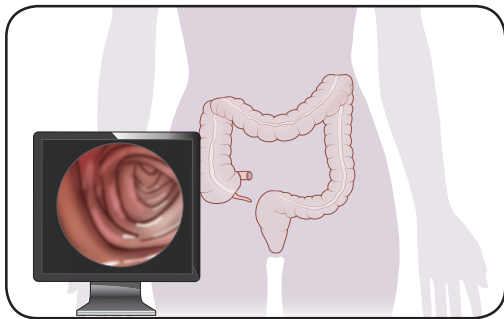
 <p>You are diabetic</p>	 <p>ANTI- antiplatelet or anticoagulants</p>	 <p>Fe IRON</p>
OR		OR
You are taking blood thinners		You are taking iron supplements



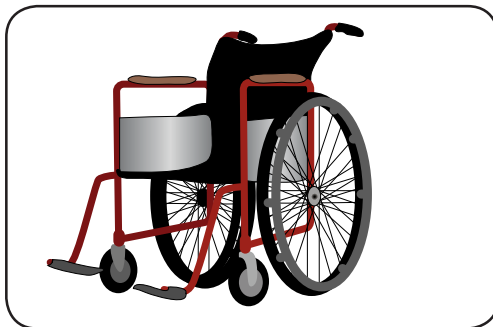
Important: ask your doctor if you should stop or continue taking the medications listed above before your colonoscopy. If you need to continue taking these medications, please tell us.

What happens a few weeks before your test?

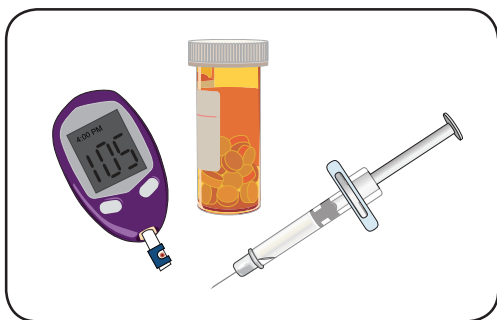
The weeks before and on the day of your test, it is important that you let the nurse or doctor know:



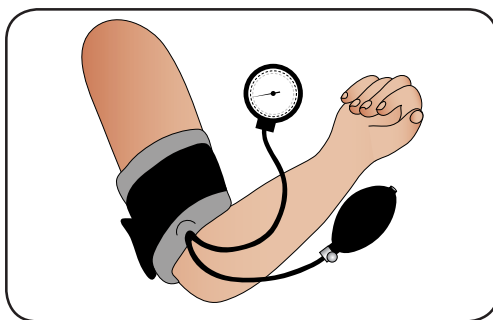
If you ever had complications or serious side effects after a colonoscopy.



If you have any health condition or physical limitations or disabilities (hearing, decreased mobility, etc.).



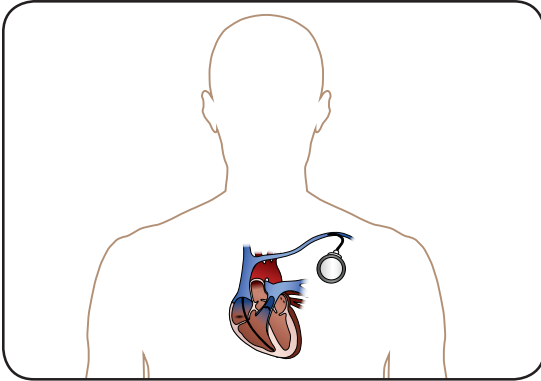
If you are diabetic. We will do our best to give you a morning appointment.



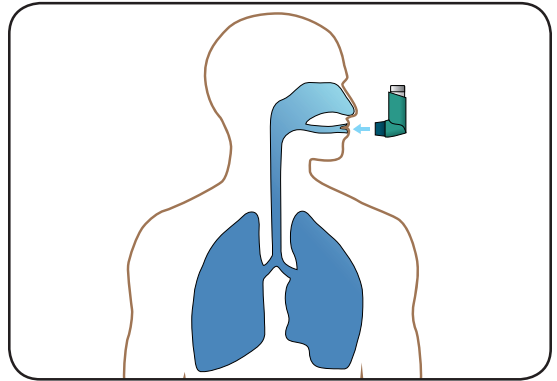
If you have low blood pressure.

What happens a few weeks before your test?

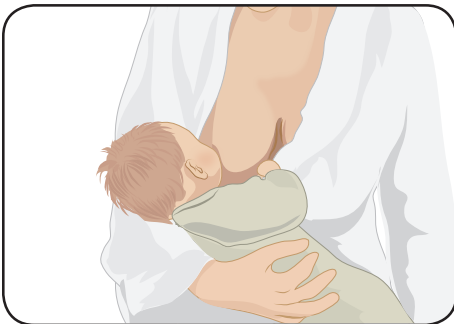
The weeks before and on the day of your test, it is important that you let the nurse or doctor know:



If you have a pacemaker or an implantable defibrillator.



If you suffer from respiratory problems or/ and you have any allergies.



If you are breastfeeding or if you might be pregnant.



If you are not comfortable with English or French, bring someone with you who can help you understand.

Bowel preparation

Follow the instructions for your bowel preparation and diet. This will help to clean your colon before your test. This will also help your doctor to see the inside of your colon better. If your colon is not clean, your test will be cancelled and you will need to have a repeat colonoscopy in the next 2 to 12 months.



7 days before your colonoscopy

- Go to your pharmacy. Buy your bowel preparation solution.
- Stop eating nuts and seeds.
- Stop your iron supplements, if you are taking this medication.
- Follow any other specific instructions that you were given by the team about your medications.

The day before and on the day of your colonoscopy

- Follow the instructions on your bowel preparation sheet.
- The bowel preparation solution may cause some nausea and bloating. These usually stop as you continue to drink the solution.



Important: Stop drinking all liquids (including water) 2 hours before your test.



On the day of your colonoscopy

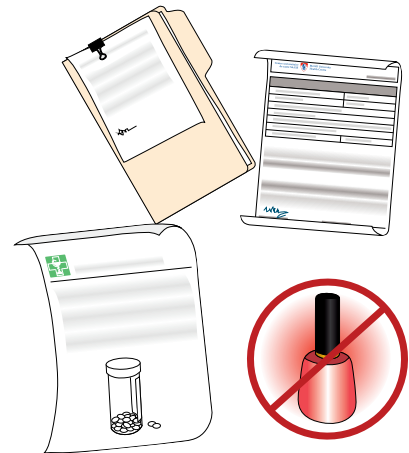


Do not drive for 24 hours after the test.

This is because of the medications we gave you. You **MUST** have an adult to accompany you home after the test. Do not use public transportation by yourself. If you do not have someone to bring you home, your test will be cancelled.



- Bring your valid medicare and hospital cards. If your hospital card has expired, please arrive 1 hour before your appointment and go to the admission office to get a new one.
- Bring your doctor's colonoscopy consult and any tests you had for the colonoscopy.
- Bring a list of your medications and allergies.
- Do not wear nail polish or jewelry.
- You must arrive at least 30 minutes before your test to get ready.
- You will be in the hospital between 1 h 30 – 3 h.



When you arrive at the endoscopy unit

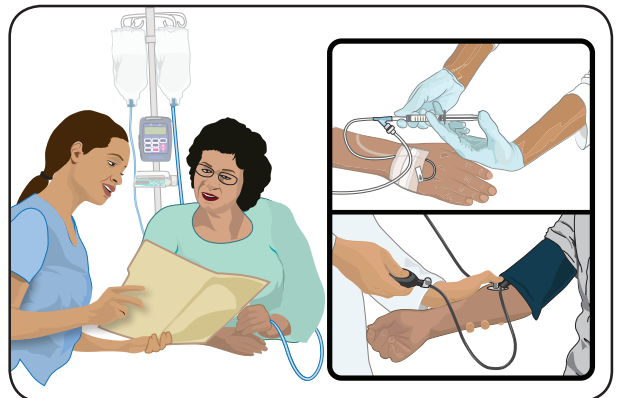
1. Go to the front desk of the endoscopy unit. Friends or family members can wait for you in the waiting room.



2. You will go to the evaluation area. We will ask you to change into a hospital gown.

A nurse will:

- Ask you questions.
- Review your chart.
- Take your blood pressure and pulse.
- Usually insert an intravenous (IV) catheter in your hand or arm for the sedation medication (for sleep) given during the colonoscopy.



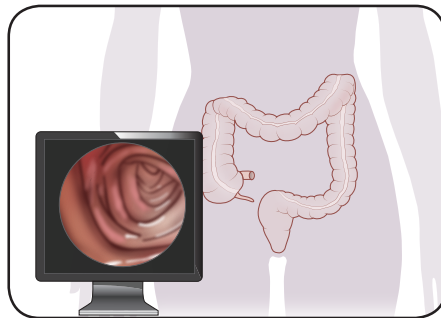
When you arrive at the endoscopy unit

3. We will take you to the procedure room when it is the time of your test.

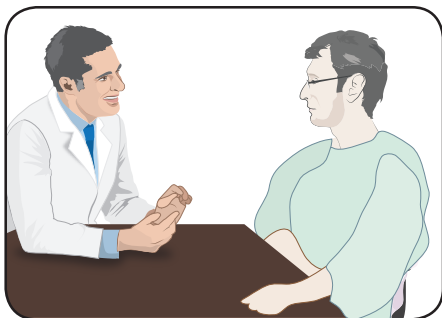
4. The doctor will:



Ask you questions and examine you.



Review the procedure with you.



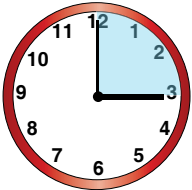
Answer your questions.



Ask you to sign a consent form.

What happens during the test?

During the test, you may feel some discomfort (pain, bloating or cramps). This is normal. These symptoms may continue after the test but usually improve over the next hours.

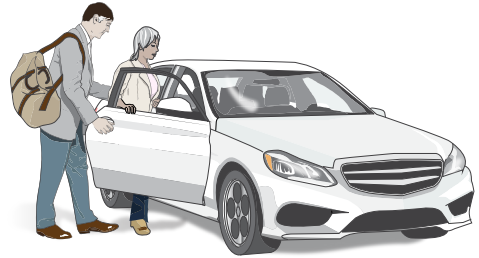


The test usually takes between 15 to 30 minutes.

What happens after the test?

1. After the test, we will take you to the recovery room. The nurses will continue to check you until the sedation wears off.
2. Your recovery can take 30 – 45 minutes.
3. You will get verbal and written instructions on what to watch for after the test and where to call if you need help.
4. Your doctor may give you a written report of your test before you leave. Your doctor may also give you a copy of this report to give to your doctor. If a written report is not given to you, a copy will be faxed or mailed to your doctor.





5. We will give you another appointment if one is needed.
6. You should be able to eat normally 30 minutes after the test.
7. The medication (sedation) given during the test may affect your reflexes and judgment for the rest of the day. For your own safety and those around you, an adult **MUST** pick you up from the unit and go home with you after the test. Do not use public transportation by yourself.
8. You should rest for the remainder of the day.
9. **For the next 24 hours because of the medication side effects, it is important that you:**



Do not drive a vehicle or operate machinery.



Do not drink alcohol.



Do not make important decisions.

Cancellations

If you need to cancel your appointment, please contact us as soon as possible. Someone else may benefit from your cancellation as there is a long waiting list for this test.

After 3 cancellations, your name will be removed from our waiting list. We will also send a letter to the doctor who referred you.



No show

If you do not go to your appointment and do not cancel your appointment by calling us, this will be considered as a “No show”. After the 3rd “No show”, your name will be removed from our waiting list. We will also send a letter to the doctor who referred you for your test.

How to contact us

If you have any questions, need additional information or explanation, call us:

Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Montreal General Hospital

1650 Cedar Avenue
Montreal, Qc.
H3G 1A4

Endoscopy Unit

Room number: C7-200 (C wing, 7th floor)

Phone number of Endoscopy Unit: 514-934-8308

Hospital card-Admitting: L6-130 (L wing, 6th floor)

Royal Victoria Hospital (Glen site)

1001 Decarie Blvd.
Montreal, Qc.
H4A 3J1

Endoscopy Unit

Room number: C03.7158 (Block C, 3rd floor)

Phone number of Endoscopy Unit: 514-843-1616

Hospital card-Admitting Adult: CRC.0046
(Block C, level RC)

Lachine Hospital

650 16th Avenue
Lachine, Qc.
H8S 3N5

Day Medicine Unit

Room number: 661 (6th floor)

Phone number of Day Medicine Unit:
514-934-1934, poste : 77517

Hospital Card-Admission Department:
1st floor, desk 5-6

Other patient education materials

Screening for colon cancer: colonoscopy video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=agf8-Qwq8w8

Canadian Cancer Society's webpage on colonoscopy

www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/diagnosis-and-treatment/tests-and-procedures/colonoscopy/?region=qc

MUHC libraries' Patient Portal:

Health information for patients and their caregivers.

www.muhclibraries.ca/patients/health-topics/colonoscopy/

Parking information

at the Glen site (RVH):

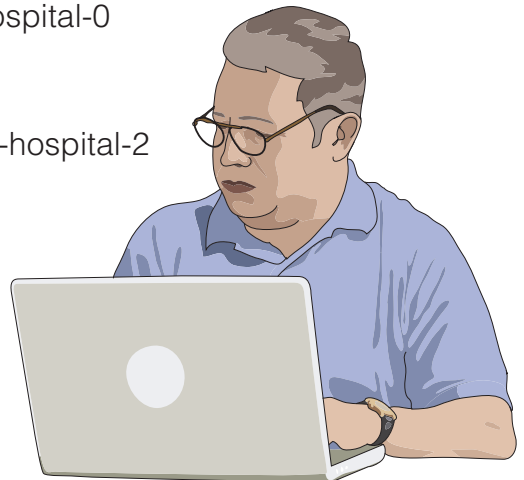
www.muhc.ca/glen/handbook/parking-hospital

at the Montreal General Hospital:

www.muhc.ca/mgh/handbook/parking-hospital-0

at the Lachine Hospital :

www.muhc.ca/lachine/handbook/parking-hospital-2



Help support the MUHC division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

Donations make a huge difference to help provide the very best care. You can make a donation in person, by mail, or online:

- **Montreal General Hospital Foundation**

1650 Cedar Avenue, room E6-129
Montreal, Qc., H3G 1A4

Phone: 514-934-8230

Website: mghfoundation.com

- **McGill University Health Centre Foundation**

- **Mailing address:**

700-5100 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West
Montreal, Qc., H4A 3T2

- **Office address at the Glen site:**

1001 Decarie Blvd, room E.S1.0647
Montreal, Qc., H4A 3T2

Phone: 514-843-1543

Website: muhcfoundation.com

- **Lachine Hospital Foundation**

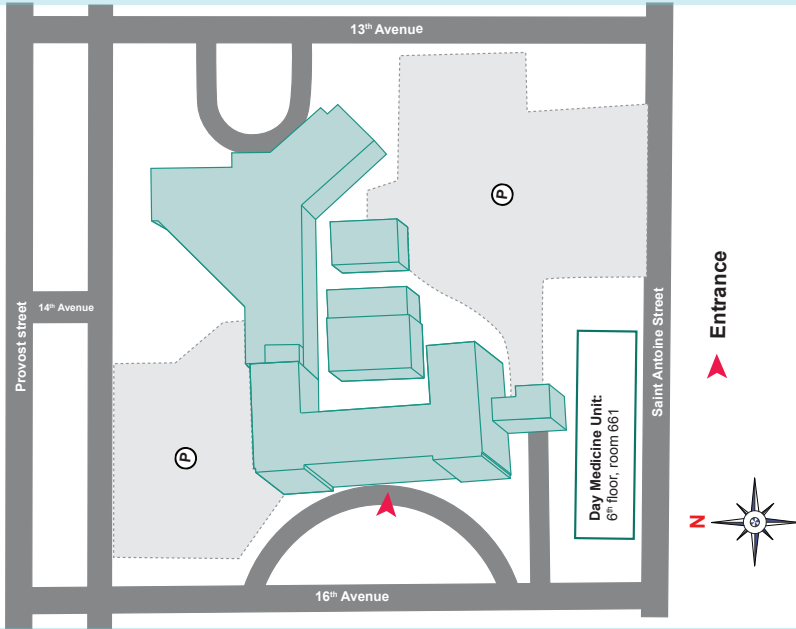
650- 16th avenue, room 2D3
Lachine, Qc., H8S 3N5

Phone: 514-637-2351, ext: 77333

Website: lachinehospitalfoundation.org

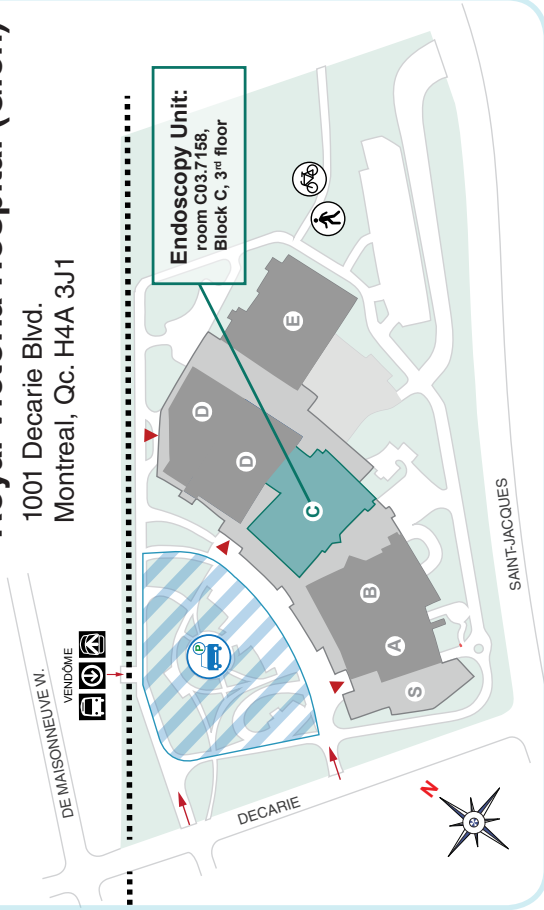
Lachine Hospital

650 16th Avenue
Lachine, Qc., H8S 3N5



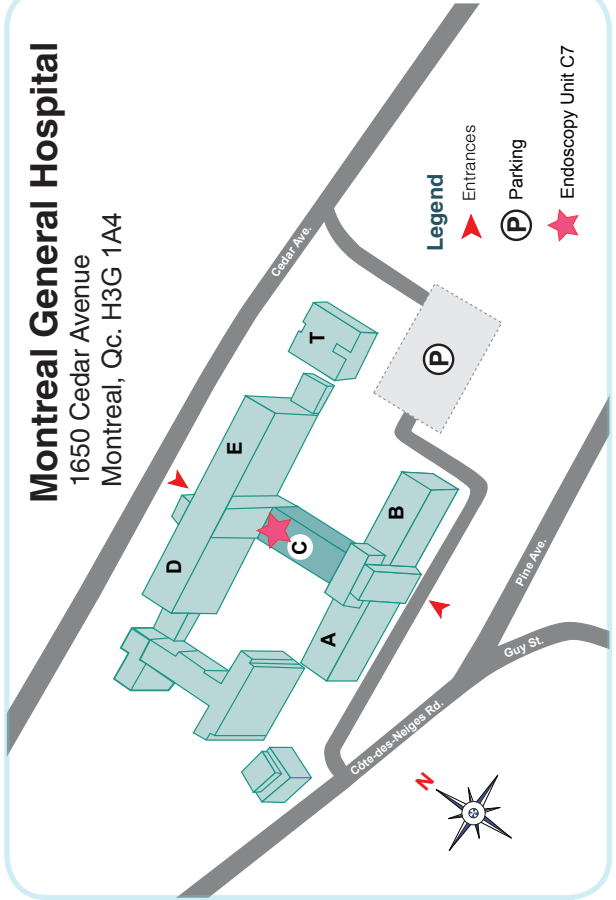
Royal Victoria Hospital (Glen)

1001 Decarie Blvd.
Montreal, Qc. H4A 3J1



Montreal General Hospital

1650 Cedar Avenue
Montreal, Qc. H3G 1A4



- Legend**
- ▲ Entrances
 - Ⓟ Parking
 - ★ Endoscopy Unit C7