

COLECTOMY

A colectomy is a surgical procedure that is often used to treat diseases like Ulcerative Colitis, Crohn's disease, and colon cancer. Colectomy means 'to remove the colon', with 'col-' meaning colon and '-ectomy' meaning to remove.

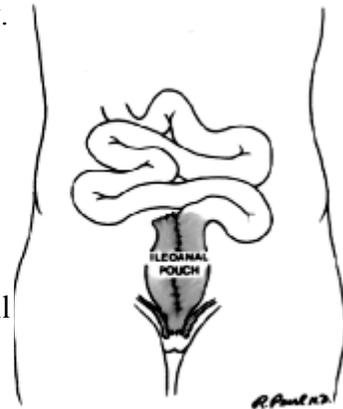
A colectomy can be performed as a partial or a total colectomy. During a partial colectomy, only a portion of the colon is removed. This may be performed if colon cancer is present, but has not spread to other areas of the colon. This may also be done after a traumatic injury to the colon, like a tear in the colon after a car accident. A total colectomy is just like a partial colectomy, but the entire colon is removed instead of just a piece. This procedure may be necessary if you have ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease.



After a colectomy, you may have a colostomy or ileostomy. Both of these terms describe a procedure in which the end of the remaining colon is brought to the surface of the skin. This allows gastrointestinal contents, like bile and waste, to leave the body through this hole. A bag, called a colostomy or ileostomy pouch, is then attached to the skin to collect the waste. The picture to the left shows a colostomy. The only difference between a colostomy and an ileostomy is the location of the stoma (the opening). The ileum is the last portion of the small intestine. If the stoma is formed in the ileum, it is called an

ileostomy. If the stoma is in the colon, it is called a colostomy.

When you have your colectomy, your surgeon will probably form an ileoanal pouch, like the picture to the right. In this case, the last part of the small intestine, or ileum, was connected to the anus, forming a new rectum. If a partial colectomy is performed, the end of the colon is reconnected to the rectum. Rarely, your surgeon may choose to wait to perform this procedure until after you have recovered from your colectomy; before you have the pouch formation, you will have an ileostomy or colostomy. It is also important to know that in some cases, it is not possible to form an ileoanal pouch. Your surgeon can answer any questions you may have about your options.



On some occasions, the rectum may be removed in addition to the entire colon. This procedure is known as a total proctocolectomy; 'procto-' meaning rectum. The most common cause for proctocolectomy is ulcerative colitis in the colon and rectum. Just like the colectomy, an ileostomy may be formed or your surgeon may form an ileoanal pouch.