

san antonio

## GASTROENTEROLOGY

# Pandemic or Not, You Should Get Your Colonoscopy

**At San Antonio Gastroenterology Associates & Endoscopy Centers, screening colonoscopies are safe, convenient, and, most importantly, potentially lifesaving.**

**T**hough the COVID-19 shutdown that put a temporary pause on elective procedures has been lifted, many patients are still leery of getting a colonoscopy. Unfortunately, experts say the consequences of delay could be dire—and even deadly.

“Even waiting a year on your routine colonoscopy means that an undetected polyp could grow from being an easy surgical removal to a cancer that cannot be treated—all within a year,” says Dr. Kevin Franklin, one of 14 gastroenterologists at San Antonio Gastroenterology Associates & Endoscopy Centers (SAGEC).

SAGEC schedules colonoscopies quickly, often within one or two weeks, and can accommodate more urgent cases as soon as the next day. Average colonoscopies last just 10 to 15 minutes, and patients relax under a heavy yet fast-acting sedation.

“Patients wake up and can hardly believe it’s over,” says Dr. Antonio Serna. “Best of all, screening and early

detection can also save other members of a patient’s family, since colorectal cancer is highly genetic. When we can find polyps and remove them before they develop into cancer, it’s literally lifesaving and very rewarding.”



Dr. Kevin Franklin



Dr. Antonio Serna

## Comprehensive, Comfortable, Safe

From fussy tummies and acid reflux to advanced liver disease, SAGEC’s gastroenterologists are equipped to treat the full spectrum of gastroenterological needs.

“For women, especially, we see a lot of irritable bowel syndrome [IBS], which is often triggered by stress,” says Dr. Serna. For patients preferring to see a female provider, SAGEC offers a female gastroenterologist and female physician

assistants.

In light of COVID-19, SAGEC is going above and beyond to create a safe and clean environment by following CDC guidelines closely. Each office is professionally deep cleaned every night, masks and social distancing are enforced, clinic appointments are

## What About At-Home Colon Cancer Screenings?

With the rising popularity of take-home stool sample kits, it’s important to weigh the pros and cons of screening options.

“If patients aren’t comfortable getting a colonoscopy, then any type of screening test is better than nothing. However, there’s a higher miss rate with at-home testing, and if the test comes back positive, patients will need to have a colonoscopy anyway. At that point, the colonoscopy is no longer covered by insurance as a screening exam because now it’s become a diagnostic exam,” says Dr. Franklin.

### BOTTOM LINE:

**Colonoscopies are still the gold standard in colon cancer screening.**

Lifestyle modifications can also go a long way in mitigating colon cancer risk, such as maintaining a healthy weight and choosing a high-fiber diet with plenty of fruits, greens, water, and limited processed foods.

spread out to avoid high volumes of patients, and telemedicine is encouraged whenever possible.

“We have locations throughout the entire city and privileges at all the hospitals, so we’re able to serve even the most urgent cases at a location that’s most convenient for the patient,” concludes Dr. Serna.



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Gastroenterology  
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