



Frequently asked questions about preparing for colonoscopy

Laxative Related Questions:

Do I need to take the entire preparation?

Yes. Failure to do so can result in an incomplete exam which can increase the chance that something could be missed and that you may have to repeat the procedure/preparation.

My appointment is early in the morning. Do I really need to wake up in the night to drink the second half of the preparation solution?

Yes. Even without anything to eat, your gastrointestinal tract will produce fluids that can make it difficult to see inside of your colon. You must complete the solution as close to the appointment as possible, while making sure it has finished working before you travel. Therefore, you must start drinking the second half of the bowel prep solution 5 hours before your appointment

Is there any way I can make the preparation solution taste better?

- Yes. Try these suggestions:
- Add Crystal Light or Kool Aid powder to it (no red, orange or purple varieties). You should add this to one cup first to make sure you like the taste before adding it to the entire preparation.
 - Suck on a Popsicle to numb your tongue before drinking the prep solution (again no red, orange or purple).
 - Chill the preparation solution
 - Use a straw near the back of the tongue to drink the solution.
 - Hold your nose and drink as quickly as possible
 - Suck on a lemon slice after each glass
 - Suck on hard candy after each glass
 - Rinse your mouth with water or a mouthwash.

Why can't I take all of the preparation the day before procedure?

Studies show that splitting the solution into two doses works better to clear the colon. You must take the preparation in two doses; half the day before and half the morning of, regardless of the time you're scheduled. Failure to do so can result in an incomplete exam which can increase the chance that something could be missed and that you may have to repeat the procedure/preparation

Can I mix the preparation with other clear liquids besides water or Gatorade?

Yes. Gatorade or similar clear liquid is preferred though as it helps to maintain electrolyte balance. Don't mix with your favorite drink because you may always associate the flavor with the preparation.

My bottom is so sore. Is there anything I can do to help with this?

Yes. Try these suggestions:

- When cleaning the area avoid rubbing.
- Gently pat with a wet washcloth or disposable alcohol free wet wipe/baby wipes.
- Apply Vaseline or A&D ointment liberally.
- You may use a medicated wipe such as Tucks.
- Warm baths or sitz baths are also helpful.

I feel nauseated. Is there anything I can do?

Yes. Try these suggestions.

- You can take a short break from drinking the laxatives.
 - Try drinking ginger ale or another clear liquid to help settle your stomach.
 - For severe cases, consider asking your personal physician to prescribe an anti-nausea medicine to help relieve your symptoms.
- Continue your preparation when the feeling has subsided.

I started vomiting the preparation can I still have my procedure?

Maybe. It depends on how much preparation you were able to drink and how well the preparation has worked. If you were able to keep 75% of preparation and are passing clear liquid then you may be able to proceed. However, If you have solid stool or were unable to keep down less than 50% of the preparation then you will probably need to reschedule.

I haven't finished the preparation solution but I seemed to be all cleaned out. Do I have to finish the solution?

Yes. Sometimes it may seem clear but the small intestine will continue to empty its contents into the colon. Your colon must be completely emptied to help ensure an accurate and thorough exam. Failure to do so can result in a colon which is not clean enough which can increase the chance that something could be missed and that you may have to repeat the procedure/procedure.

I started my laxatives and I have not had a bowel movement yet. What should I do?

Patients will have different responses to the laxatives. Some may have a bowel movement immediately; others it may take 2 hours or longer. Continue drinking clear liquids and follow your bowel preparation instructions.

I finished the preparation but I am continuing to pass solid stool. What should I do?

If you are still passing solid stool then you will likely need to reschedule with an alternative preparation.

Please call us immediately.

San Jose (408) 972-6530 or Santa Clara (408) 851-2750

I am unable to tolerate the laxative, what should I do?

You will need to reschedule with an alternative preparation.

Please call us immediately.

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Diet Related Questions

What are examples of low fiber diet that I can eat?

- White bread without nuts and seeds
- White rice, plain white pasta and crackers
- Refined hot cereals, such as Cream of Wheat, or cold cereals with less than 1 gram of fiber per serving
- Pancakes or waffles made from white refined flour
- Most canned or well-cooked vegetables and fruits without skins or seeds
- Fruit and vegetable juice with little or no pulp, fruit flavored drinks and flavored waters
- Tender meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and tofu
- Butter, Margarine, oils and salad dressing without seeds.

What are foods I should AVOID?

- Whole wheat breads/cereals with nuts, seeds or fruit
- Brown rice, wild rice
- Raw/steamed vegetables, vegetables with seeds; corn in any form
- Prunes, raisins, other dried fruits, fruits with seeds
- Nuts, crunchy peanut butter
- Tough fibrous meats, cooked dried beans, peas or lentils
- Popcorn, nuts, seeds, granola, candies with nuts or seeds, coconut

Can I drink alcoholic beverages during the preparation?

NO. Alcoholic beverages can cause dehydration, and therefore we strongly recommend against drinking alcohol during bowel preparation.

What are examples of a clear liquid diet?

Jello: Lime, Lemon and orange flavored
Soda: 7up, Sprite, Ginger Ale and Gatorade
Popsicles: orange and green colors
Bullion/Broths: Chicken, Beef or Vegetable (no noodles or meat)
Juices: white Cranberry, white grape or apple
Tea: with sugar only
NO milk or cream
Avoid red and purple liquids
No Alcohol

I drank smoothies, shakes and milk 2 days prior to the procedure.

This may lead to leftover solid material which will limit visualization of the colon. If, however, you are passing clear liquid after the preparation, then you may be OK to proceed. Unfortunately we will not know if you are clean until we actually do the procedure. If you are not clean you will need to reschedule.

I have an afternoon colonoscopy appointment. Do I really need to be on clear liquids for over 24 hours?

Yes. It is important to start the clear liquid diet at breakfast time (no solid food), the day before your appointment. It will make it easier for the bowel preparation solution to clean your colon and greatly improve the quality of your bowel preparation

Do I have to drink more clear liquids besides the preparation solution?

Yes. It is very important to drink 8 ounces of fluid every hour the day before your procedure. It will clean the colon out and will help to keep you hydrated during the whole process.



Medication related questions

I forgot to stop iron, can I still have my procedure?

Probably ok. Iron may interfere with the visualization of the colon. Unfortunately we will not know if you are clean until we actually do the procedure. If you are not clean you will need to reschedule.

I have questions about my diabetes medications?

Please check with your primary care doctor if you have any additional questions on how you should take your diabetes medications.

I accidentally took ibuprofen, aspirin, advil, alleve, motrin, Naprosyn, Indocin, etc, can I still have a procedure?

Yes. These medications may make you prone to bleeding but taking one dose should not be a problem. If you are taking other blood thinners please make sure to tell your doctor (see next question).

I take blood thinners. Do I need to let someone know?

Yes. If you are on Coumadin, the anticoagulation clinic needs to know that you are having a procedure. Ask your primary care doctor if it is safe to stop taking other blood thinners. This includes: clopidogrel (Plavix), Aspirin/dipyridamole (Aggrenox), dabigatran (Pradaxa), rivaroxaban (Xarelto), apixaban (Eliquis) and edoxaban (Savaysa)

Can I take herbal supplements and vitamins?

You should not take iron supplements or any vitamins/supplements which contain iron for 1 week prior. You should not take fish oil pills for 1 week prior.



Should I take my medications on the day of the procedure?

You should take any important medications (for example: medications for blood pressure (see below), pain, post transplant, seizure or abnormal heart rhythms). You can take these medications with a sip of water. Other medications (for example: medications for thyroid, antidepressants, cholesterol, hepatitis B) can be taken as soon as the procedure is completed. If you have questions about specific medication, please contact your primary care physician

Should I take my blood pressure medications?

Yes except for diuretics (water pills). You should continue to take your blood pressure medications even on the day of your procedure with sips of water. The only exception is that you should not take any diuretics such as furosemide (Lasix), bumetanide (Bumex) spironolactone (Aldactone), hydrochlorothiazide, acetazolamide (Diamox), methazolamide (Neptazane), amiloride (Midamor), triamterene (Dyrenium). Do not take diuretics the day before or the morning of the colonoscopy. You can take them once you have completed your test.

Other frequently asked questions

I am currently on my menstrual period. Is it ok to have my procedure?

Yes. It is safe to have a colonoscopy. It will not interfere with the procedure.

I don't have a ride home, is it ok to have my procedure?

No. You must have a responsible adult come with you, wait for you and accompany you home. You can only take a taxi or bus if a responsible adult will accompany you. If you do not have someone to accompany/drive you home, you will not be able to have your sedated procedure and will need be rescheduled. One option for those with no ride is to do the procedure with no sedation.

What should I bring to my appointment?

- Your medical record number
- A updated list of your medications
- A driver
- Copayment

I have a cold. Is it ok for me to have my procedure?

In most cases yes. If you have significant underlying lung disease or if you think you have something more serious you should speak with a physician. If you have shortness of breath or fever, then it would be best to postpone your procedure.

What time should I arrive for my procedure?

You should arrive 60 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment time in order complete paperwork, change clothing, answer pre procedure questions, and to have an IV placed. Coming late will delay your procedure.