Getting Ready for Your Colonoscopy

“One and Done”
Let’s do This Once and Do it Right!

Inside, you will find:

• Instructions on how to prepare
• More information about your colonoscopy
• Answers to commonly asked questions
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>> Help us Help You! <<

If you follow these instructions, then you'll give your doctor the best chance of doing this right the first time. That way you won't need to repeat the test. Let's make this “one and done” together.
About this Booklet

• You’ve been scheduled for a colonoscopy. Colonoscopy can find cancer and can save lives. This booklet will help you get ready.

• We know it can be challenging to get ready for a colonoscopy. We also know that you may have many questions about the test. We created this booklet to help answer your questions.

• After you read this booklet, go to page 19 and complete the checklist as you prepare for your procedure.

About Colon Cancer

• One out of every 16 Americans will get colon cancer.

• If colon cancer is found early, then most people live. If colon cancer is found late, then only 5% of people will live.

About Getting Ready

• The MOST IMPORTANT thing you can do is to empty out your colon by carefully following the diet described in this booklet.

• By now you should have received “bowel prep” medicine in the mail. If you have not, call this number: 310-268-3256.

• We want to help you get ready. If you come in with your colon properly emptied out, then we can make this “ONE AND DONE.”

“One and done” means just that: let’s do this once, do it right, and then be done. Then we won’t run the risk and inconvenience of asking you to come back and repeat the test.
How does a colonoscopy work?

- The purpose of a colonoscopy is to look inside your large intestine (colon) for polyps, cancers, ulcers, and other conditions.
- Just before the procedure starts, you will receive some medicine to make you sleepy.
- Most people do not remember having the procedure.
- The doctor will pass a flexible tube from below. The tube has a small camera and a headlight which allow the doctor to see the inside of your colon on a TV monitor.
- The doctor can take biopsies of abnormal areas, and can also remove polyps. You will wake up shortly after the test is over.

Here is a picture of how it works. The scope bends as it passes through the colon. The headlight provides light so the doctor can see. The scope is passed through the whole colon. It goes farther than a sigmoidoscopy, which only looks at half the colon.

A sigmoidoscopy only examines the lower third of the colon; colonoscopy examines the entire length.

The end of the type of scope used for colonoscopies.
**Why is it Important to Get Clean on the Inside?**

Your doctor must be able to see in order to do the test right. If it is dirty on the inside, then your doctor may not see important things, like polyps or cancer, and may even have to do the test again. That would mean you would have to start over, and nobody wants to do that. So help us help you to make this “one and done.”

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**Imagine This:**

Think of it this way: a clean colon is like driving on a country road on a sunny day. A dirty colon is like driving in a snow storm.

When your colon is clean, doing the colonoscopy is like driving on a country road on a sunny day. It’s easy to see and easy to drive.

When your colon is dirty, doing the colonoscopy is like driving on a winter road in a snow storm. It is hard to see and hard to drive.
What you Eat

- Look on a calendar and find the day of your test. Now go back TWO DAYS before your test. On that day, you will eat a regular breakfast.
- After that, you will eat a regular lunch.
- You will have clear liquids for dinner. Go to Page 9 for a list of things you can eat.

What you Drink

- For breakfast and lunch, you may drink whatever fluids you normally drink. But after lunch, you must only drink clear liquids. Go to Page 11 for a list of things you can drink.
- Be sure to drink at least 6 tall glasses (at least 8-10 ounces each) of clear liquids in the afternoon. Go to page 13 to find out what a “clear liquid” is.
**What you Eat**

- You must not eat any solid foods the day before your colonoscopy. You may only eat a clear liquid diet. Go to page 9 for things you can eat.

**What you Drink**

- You must drink only clear liquids for breakfast, lunch, and dinner,
- Be sure to drink at least 12 tall glasses (at least 8-10 ounces each) of clear liquids throughout the day in addition to what is instructed for your bowel prep.

**Taking your “Prep”**

- You should already have your “bowel prep” medicine. If not, call: 310-268-3256
- The instructions for your prep are included with this mailing. You will start taking the prep the evening before your test. Follow the directions carefully.
- You will take the second part of the prep the morning of your test starting 4 hours before the scheduled time of your colonoscopy. If your procedure is in the morning, then this means you will have to get up very early to take this part of your prep. We know it is hard to get up this early, but it is very important that you take the prep 4 hours before your colonoscopy in order for the prep to work.
- How do you know if your prep is working? Go to page 14 to find out.

### One Day Before Your Colonoscopy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>What you Eat</th>
<th>What you Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning</strong></td>
<td>Clear liquid diet for breakfast. <strong>No solid food.</strong></td>
<td>Drink at least 4 tall glasses of clear liquids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afternoon</strong></td>
<td>Clear liquid diet for lunch. <strong>No solid food.</strong></td>
<td>Drink at least 4 tall glasses of clear liquids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evening</strong></td>
<td>Clear liquid diet for dinner. Take first dose of your prep medicine as directed.</td>
<td>Drink at least 4 tall glasses of clear liquids.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DAY OF Your Colonoscopy

What you Eat

- You must not eat any solid foods prior to your colonoscopy, even if your colonoscopy is scheduled for the afternoon.
- You can eat a regular diet once you are fully awake after the test is over.

What you Drink

- You must drink only clear liquids prior to your colonoscopy.
- Be sure to drink at least 2 tall glasses (at least 8-10 ounces each) of clear sports drink (like Propel® Fitness Water or clear Gatorade®) prior to your colonoscopy.

Taking Your Prep

- You must take the second part of your prep the morning of your test.
- Be sure to take it 4 hours before your test, even if that means having to get up very early.

Day of Your Colonoscopy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>What you Eat</th>
<th>What you Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Clear liquid diet for breakfast. No solid food.</td>
<td>Report for your scheduled colonoscopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Regular meal after colonoscopy is done.</td>
<td>Drink 2 tall glasses of clear sports drink (like Propel® Fitness Water or Clear Gatorade®) before your colonoscopy. Drink at least 8-10 ounces per glass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>YOU’RE DONE! Regular meal for dinner.</td>
<td>YOU’RE DONE! No more restrictions on what you drink.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are OK Foods to Eat?

- Clear broth - OK
- Flavored gelatin - OK
- Popsicles - OK
- Hard candy - OK
- Honey - OK

>> What about Red Food? <<

Red food is OK. You may have heard that red food is not acceptable. However, there's no proof that red food makes any difference to the success of your procedure. When people follow all the instructions in this booklet, they usually end up with clean preps, even if they eat red foods. It's hard enough to follow the diet, so why limit yourself to certain colors? Feel free to enjoy all the colors of the rainbow.
What Foods are NOT OK to Eat?

- No fruits - Not OK
- No vegetables - Not OK
- No soups with vegetables, noodles, rice, meat or other chunks of food - Not OK
- No milk and dairy products - Not OK
- No breads, grains, rice, cereals - Not OK
- No meats - Not OK
What Drinks are OK?

- Water and mineral water - OK
- Apple juice - OK
- Black coffee - OK
- Tea - OK
- Soda pop, ginger ale, and club soda - OK
- Clear sports drink (like Propel® Fitness Water or clear Gatorade®) - OK
What Drinks are NOT OK?

- No orange juice - **Not OK**
- No pineapple juice - **Not OK**
- No milk - **Not OK**
- No milkshakes - **Not OK**
- No Coffee with Cream - **Not OK**

>>What about Alcohol?<<

Although alcohol is a clear liquid, it can make you dehydrated. You should **NOT** drink alcohol during the preparation for your test.
What is a “Clear Liquid”?  

- As you get ready for your colonoscopy, you must only drink clear liquids.
- A liquid is “clear” if you can read something through it. Use this simple test to figure out what you can drink, and what you cannot drink.

This is orange juice. It’s not clear, because you can’t read newspaper print through it. Don’t drink this.

This is pineapple juice. It’s also not clear. Don’t drink this.

This is apple juice. You can read newspaper print right through it. You can drink this.
How Do You Know When Your Prep Is Working?

- The stool coming out should look like the stuff you are eating and drinking – clear and **without many particles**.
- You know you’re done when the stool coming out is **yellow, light, liquid, and clear** – like urine.

**Here’s a Guide:**

- **Dark and murky** NOT OK
- **Brown and murky** NOT OK
- **Dark orange and semi-clear** NOT Okay
- **Light orange and mostly clear** Almost There
- **Yellow and clear, like urine** You’re Ready!
Can I drive myself home after my colonoscopy?

• **NO.** You will receive medication to make you sleepy during the test. That means you cannot drive home. You must arrange for someone to drive you home after the test.

• You may use public transportation (taxi or bus), but only if you have an adult escort.

• You may choose to lodge overnight after the procedure if you do not have a driver or escort. Let our clerk know about this upon check in.

• You may arrange for transportation with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) at least two weeks before the colonoscopy. Phone 310-478-3711 extension 49062.

How long will the test take?

• The test itself usually takes 10-30 minutes. But expect to spend the entire morning and part of the afternoon at the Medical Center to have the test and to recover from any sleeping medicine.

• If you arrive between 6:30 AM and 7:00 AM, you likely will be ready to go home by late morning or very early afternoon.

• If you arrive later, you may not be ready to go home before very late afternoon.

What if I take blood pressure medicines?

• If you take blood pressure medicine, be sure to still use the medicine while preparing for the test. On the day of your test, you should take your blood pressure medicine with water before 6:00 AM.
What if I take aspirin, clopidogrel, or Plavix®?

• STOP taking these medicines **one week before** your colonoscopy. You will continue these medicines **after** the test, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.

• Please check with your doctor if you have any further questions or concerns about these medicines.

What if I take an anti-inflammatory medicine, like Motrin®, Aleve®, Ibuprofen, Naprosyn®, or Naproxen?

• STOP taking these medicines **one week before** your colonoscopy. You will continue these medicines **after** the test, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.

• Please check with your doctor if you have any further questions or concerns about these medicines.

What if I take a blood thinner like Coumadin® or warfarin?

• You may have already received instructions on how to take your Coumadin® or warfarin prior to the colonoscopy. If not, then please check with your doctor as soon as possible to determine how to proceed.

• You will continue to take your Coumadin® or warfarin **after** the colonoscopy unless your doctor gives you other instructions.

What if I take diabetes medicines?

• If you are diabetic, take **half** of your diabetes medicine while on the clear liquid diet. Then, **do not** take your medicine on the morning of the test. You will resume your medicines after the test.

• Please check with your doctor if you have any further questions or concerns about these medicines.
**What if I take fish oil?**

- STOP taking fish oil *two days before* your colonoscopy. You can continue taking this *after* the test, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- Please check with your doctor if you have any further questions or concerns about these instructions.

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**How do I know when my bowel prep is complete?**

- You know your bowel prep is complete when your stool becomes clear and yellow, as described on page 14. If your stool becomes clear before completion of your prep, please continue taking your full prep as instructed.

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**My prep hasn't started working yet. Is that OK?**

- Different people respond differently to the bowel prep—some people start having diarrhea within minutes of taking the prep, while others have no response for an hour or more.
- If you have waited more than 3 hours without a response, then it may not be working well. Be sure you are drinking enough fluid, as instructed on page 5. If that doesn't work, take the second part of your prep and continue to drink fluids. It will work eventually.

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**What are the side effects of the “bowel prep”?**

- You will have lots of *diarrhea* from the bowel prep. This will start anywhere between a *few minutes to 3 hours after you start the prep*. You will spend a lot of time on the toilet once you start taking the prep. So plan to be home, and plan to be near a toilet.
- Most people have *bloating and abdominal discomfort*. This is normal. Do not be alarmed if you feel these symptoms.
- Many people have *nausea*. This also normal.
- Some people do not like the taste or smell of the medicine. Please do not let this get in the way of taking the medicine as directed.
- Rarely, some people *throw up* while taking the prep. If this happens, *stop taking the prep* and call the *on-call GI doctor*. Call the VA operator at 310-478-3711, dial zero, and ask to speak with the page operator. Then ask to page the “on call GI Fellow,” who is at “pager 5844.”
What if I have other questions?

If you are having any trouble preparing for your test, or have questions about this booklet, you may call this number between the hours of 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday: (310) 478-3711, ext. 41898. Leave a message if there is no response, and you will be called back. If you call after hours, then you will be called back the next day.

On the day of your colonoscopy, report to the

GI Endoscopy Suite
Building 500, 5th Floor EAST (CPC)
Room 5239

Telephone: (310) 478-3711 extension 42485 or (310) 478-3711 extension 48712
Here’s a checklist of things to do as you prepare for your colonoscopy. As you do each one, check it off the list by marking an “X” in each box. Make sure each box has been checked prior to coming in for your procedure.

**Before you Start**

- [ ] Read the booklet carefully.
- [ ] Make sure you have your bowel prep kit. If not, call your doctor.

**Two Days Before your Colonoscopy**

- [ ] Eat breakfast – regular solid food okay.
- [ ] Eat lunch – regular solid food okay.
- [ ] Eat dinner – clear liquids only, no solid foods.
- [ ] Drink at least 6 tall glasses of clear liquids throughout the afternoon and evening.

**One Day Before your Colonoscopy**

- [ ] Eat breakfast – clear liquids only, no solid foods.
- [ ] Eat lunch – clear liquids only, no solid foods.
- [ ] Eat dinner – clear liquids only, no solid foods.
- [ ] Take bowel prep in afternoon/evening as instructed.
- [ ] Drink at least 12 tall glasses of clear liquids throughout the day.

**Day of your Colonoscopy**

- [ ] Take second part of bowel prep in the morning as instructed, starting 4 hours before your colonoscopy.
- [ ] Drink 2 tall glasses of clear sports drink prior to your appointment.
- [ ] Report for your colonoscopy as instructed.
Remember: Let’s Make this “One and Done” Together!

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