

# Colonoscopy prep instructions

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**Read this information as soon as you get it.**

# Getting ready for your colonoscopy

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**Read this information as soon as you get it.** This handout includes important details about how to prepare for this exam and what to expect. If you have questions, please call our office.



## Plan ahead

- Ask an adult family member or friend to drive you to and from your exam. You will be sleepy after the exam and must not drive or leave by yourself. If you use a non-medical ride service such as a taxi, Lyft or Uber, or public transportation, an adult family member or friend must ride home with you.
- Plan to take off from work the day of your exam.
- For your safety, an adult must stay with you at home the night after your exam. This is because the medicine we give you can make you sleepy and not as alert.
- Do not plan on taking a long distance trip for 10 days after your exam because if we remove any polyps, there is a small chance of having delayed health problems afterwards.



## Home medicines

- If you take medicine for diabetes**, call the doctor who prescribes this medicine. Tell them you are having a colonoscopy and ask if you need to adjust the dose of your diabetes medicines.
- If you take any type of blood thinning medicine**, such as Coumadin, Plavix, Lovenox, Brilinta, Eliquis or Xarelto, you may need to stop taking it or change the dose for a short amount of time. These changes depend on the medicine you take. Call the doctor who prescribed your blood thinner. Tell them you are having a colonoscopy and ask if you need to change how and when you take your blood thinning medicine. If your doctor says it is not ok for you to stop taking your blood thinner, call our office. Some patients keep taking blood thinners due to special situations. **Do not stop taking aspirin if it is prescribed for medical reasons such as heart disease or stroke.**
- 7 days before your exam**, stop taking herbs, iron pills and vitamins with iron.



## Diet changes

For a colonoscopy, **you must change your diet for a few days and take the bowel prep medicine your doctor orders.** The bowel prep medicine is a laxative that cleans stool (poop) out of your colon so your doctor can see the area clearly because your exam may need to be canceled or redone sooner than planned.

Make these diet changes to help improve the effect of your bowel prep medicines.

- For 5 days before your exam,** stop eating foods that are hard to digest:
  - No nuts or small seeds such as sesame and poppy seeds
  - No beans, raw (fresh) fruits, vegetables with seeds, corn, popcorn
  - No whole grains such as oatmeal, multigrain bread and brown rice
- The day before and the day of your exam,** follow the special diet instructions in the **How to do your bowel prep** section, which starts on page 5.



## What to bring to your exam

- Photo ID and health insurance cards.
- List of all medicines, vitamins, herbs and supplements you take. Include the medicine name, dose, when you take them, why you take them and name of the doctor who prescribed them.
- List of any allergies you have and/or if you do not react well to certain medicines.
- Advance directives, living will and durable health care power of attorney, if you have them.
- C-pap or Bi-pap machine if you use one at home.
- Portable oxygen tank if you use oxygen at home.
- Phone number for the person taking you home.



## What else should I know?

- Read the rest of this handout. It has important information about your exam and how to prepare.
- Call our office if you have questions, or to change or cancel your exam.

# What happens during a colonoscopy?

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A colonoscopy is a test that lets your doctor see inside your colon and rectum. During this exam, your doctor can look for and remove small growths called polyps. Most colorectal cancers start as a polyp, so **taking polyps out early helps prevent colorectal cancer**.



Plan for this exam process to take at least 3 hours. Often it takes 1 hour to prepare, 1 hour to do the exam and 1 hour to recover.

## After check in

After checking in, you change into a hospital gown. An IV (intravenous) line is put in your arm with a needle but then the needle is removed, leaving a thin flexible tube. Our team will ask you questions about your health and help answer your questions. Your family can wait with you. Once we are ready, we take you to an exam room and ask you to lay on your left side.

## During your exam

In the exam room we give you medicine through your IV to help you relax and feel comfortable throughout your colonoscopy. Your doctor then inserts a device called a colonoscope into your rectum. This device is a long, flexible lighted tube with a lens for viewing, and a tool for removing tissue. They also use a sterile water rinse and inflate your colon with gas so they can get a better view of the lining.

If your doctor removes polyps or other abnormal growths in your colon or rectum, the tissue is sent to a lab for testing. It takes up to 1 week to get the results.

## After your exam

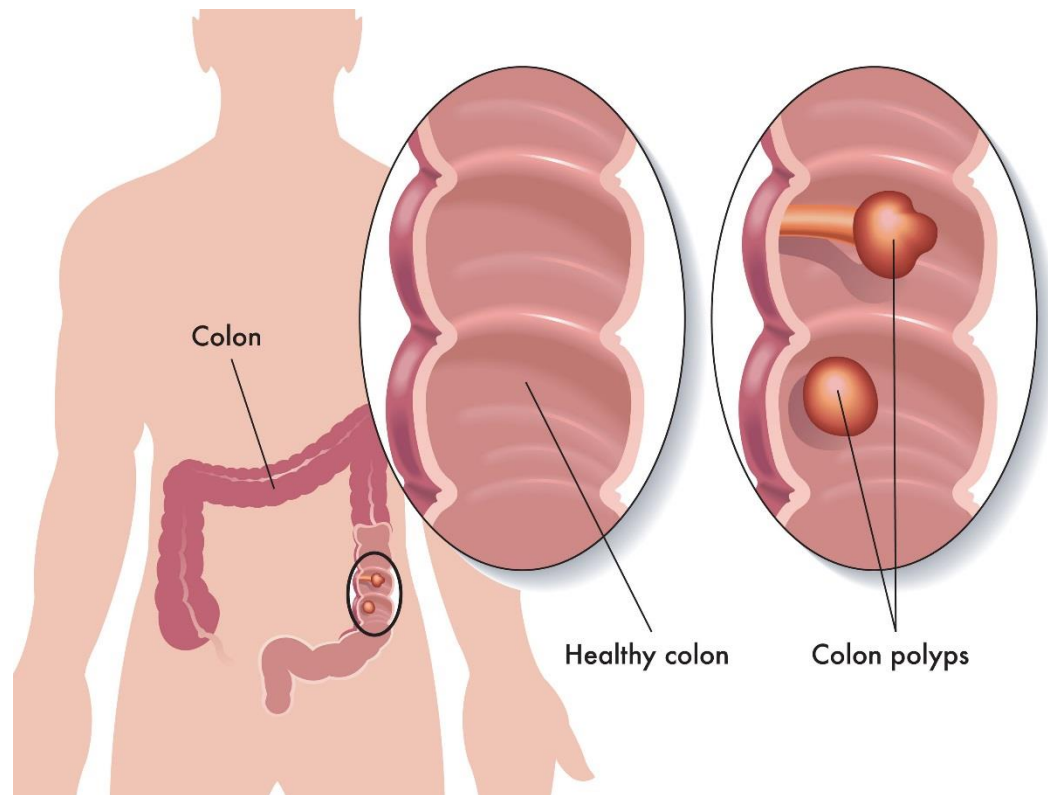
Once your exam is done, our staff monitors you in our recovery area and your family can stay with you. Before leaving, your doctor talks to you about your exam and a staff member goes over your discharge papers.

**For 24 hours after your exam:** It is common to have some cramping, bloating and/or gas. The medicine we give you to relax makes you feel sleepy and forgetful, so you should not drive, use machinery or do things where you need to be alert. For your safety, an adult must stay with you at home the night after your exam.

# What is a colonoscopy?

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A colonoscopy is a test that lets your doctor see inside your colon and rectum. During this exam, your doctor can look for and remove small growths called polyps. Most colorectal cancers start as a polyp, so **taking polyps out early helps prevent colorectal cancer**.



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For a colonoscopy, **you must change your diet for a few days and take the bowel prep medicine your doctor orders**. The bowel prep medicine is a laxative that cleans stool (poop) out of your colon so your doctor can see the area clearly. If your doctor cannot do a full exam because there is stool in your colon, they may schedule you for a repeat exam at a later date.

To learn more, read **How to do your bowel prep**, which starts on page 5.

# How to do your bowel prep

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For this exam, **you must change your diet for a few days and take the bowel prep medicine your doctor orders.** The bowel prep medicine is a laxative that cleans stool (poop) out of your colon. This helps your doctor see the area clearly. If there is stool in your colon, your exam may need to be cancelled or redone sooner than it would if there was a good or excellent cleansing.

Most bowel preps are split into 2 parts. You take one part of your bowel prep, wait for at least few hours and then take the second part of your bowel prep. Read these instructions carefully.

## What to expect

The bowel prep medicine causes frequent and watery poop (diarrhea), so stay near a bathroom after you take it. Sometimes it takes a few hours for it to start working. It is normal to have some mild belly cramps and bloating after drinking the bowel prep. If your bottom gets sore from the frequent bowel movements, you can apply Desitin cream or Vaseline to your bottom.



For the bowel prep, you can start off the day before your exam by eating a banana and white toast. After that, you can only have clear liquids and 2 Saltine crackers to help with nausea – **do not eat any other solid food after midnight.** Many people say the bowel prep is the hardest part, but it is very important that you finish it so your doctor can clearly see your colon and rectum during the exam.

## What you will need

- Bowel prep medicine** – pick this up from your drug store a few days before your exam. Most patients take 2 doses split apart to give their bowel a rest and improve the cleansing effect.
- Clear liquids** – clear liquids are those you can see through and include:
  - Water, clear pop like ginger ale and clear fruit juices **without pulp** such as apple, lemonade or white grape
  - Clear broth – beef, chicken or vegetable
  - Jell-O, popsicles and sports drinks like Gatorade - **no red or dark colors**
  - Plain coffee or tea – **no milk or creamer**





## How to Do a Split-Dose Bowel Prep

<p><b>2 to 3 days before your exam</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pick up your bowel prep medicine from your pharmacy.</li> <li>2. Buy any clear liquids you want for your prep days – a list is on page 5.</li> </ol>
<p><b>The day before your exam</b></p>	<p>In the morning, you may eat a banana and white toast. After that, you can only have clear liquids and 2 Saltine crackers to help with nausea - <b>do not eat any other solid food</b>. Don't drink alcohol.</p> <p><b>Between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take the first dose of the laxative medicine.</li> <li>2. Drink liquids as written in the instructions that come with the laxative.</li> </ol> <p><b>The rest of the night</b></p> <p>Stay near the toilet. The medicine helps clean your bowel for the exam and causes bowel movements that can be sudden.</p> <p><b>Try to drink 8 ounces of clear liquids each hour you are awake.</b></p>
<p><b>The day of your exam</b></p> 	<p>Take your heart or blood pressure medicines with water.</p> <p><b>5 hours before your arrival time</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drink the second half of your bowel prep.</li> <li>2. Drink liquids as written in the instructions that come with the laxative.</li> </ol> <p><b>Stop drinking clear liquids 3 hours before your arrival time.</b></p> <p>Don't drink alcohol the whole day.</p> 



If you think your bowel prep is not working or if you have questions, call our office.

## How to Do a Same Day Bowel Prep

<p><b>2 or 3 days before your exam</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pick up the 4 liter PEG solution bowel prep medicine from your pharmacy. The medicine may be called Go-Lytely or Nu-Lytely.  You cannot do a same day bowel prep with brand name bowel preps such as Clenpiq, Halflytely, Prepopik, Osmoprep, Moviprep, Plenvu, Suprep or Sutab. This is because these laxatives must be split into 2 doses and taken several hours apart.</li> <li>2. Buy any clear liquids you want for your prep days - a list is on page 5.</li> <li>3. The bowel prep medicine can cause some mild nausea. If you are concerned about this, you may want to buy some peppermint or ginger lozenges, which can help.</li> </ol>
<p><b>The day before your exam</b></p>	<p>In the morning you may eat a banana and white toast. After that, you can only have clear liquids and 2 Saltine crackers to help with nausea - <b>do not eat any other solid food</b>. Don't drink alcohol.</p>
<p><b>The day of your exam</b></p> 	<p>Take your heart or blood pressure medicines with water.</p> <p><b>At 5:00 a.m.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mix the powder in the jug with water based on the directions that come with it. This is your bowel prep.</li> <li>2. Drink the entire 4 liters of bowel prep medicine. It may be easier to drink it through a straw.</li> </ol>  <p>Stay near the toilet. The medicine helps clean your bowel for the exam and causes bowel movements that can be sudden.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>Stay hydrated by drinking clear liquids.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Stop drinking clear liquids 3 hours before your arrival time.</b></p> <p>Don't drink alcohol the whole day.</p>



If you think your bowel prep is not working or if you have questions, call our office.







The instructions on the Miralax bottle are not the same as what is listed here. For your bowel prep, follow the steps listed in this section.

## How to Do a Split-Dose Bowel Prep with Miralax

<p><b>2 to 3 days before your exam</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Pick up these bowel prep items at a grocery or drugstore:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ 1 bottle of Miralax - 8.3 ounces (238 grams)</li><li>□ 1 box of Dulcolax laxative tablets or generic bisacodyl – 5 mg each</li><li>□ 64 ounce bottle of Gatorade, Gatorade G2 or Propel Zero – <b>do not buy red or purple.</b> If you have diabetes, Gatorade G2 or Propel Zero are preferred</li></ul></li><li>2. Buy any clear liquids you want for your prep days – a list is on page 5.</li></ol>
<p><b>The day before your exam</b></p>	<p>In the morning you may eat a banana and white toast. After that, you can only have clear liquids and 2 Saltine crackers to help with nausea – <b>you cannot eat any other solid food.</b> Don't drink alcohol.</p> <p><b>Between 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.</b></p> <p>Drink an extra 8 ounces of clear liquids each hour.</p> <p><b>At 3:00 p.m.</b></p> <p>Take 2 Dulcolax (bisacodyl) tablets with 8 ounces of clear liquid.</p> <p><b>At 5:00 pm</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mix the whole bottle of Miralax powder in 64 ounces of Gatorade, Gatorade G2 or Propel Zero. Shake until the Miralax is dissolved.</li><li>2. Drink an 8 ounce glass of the mixture every 10 to 15 minutes for a total of 4 glasses (32 ounces).</li><li>3. Put the rest of the mixture in the refrigerator. It should be 4 cups. You will drink it the next day for the second half of your prep.</li><li>4. Take 2 Dulcolax (bisacodyl) tablets with your last glass of the mixture, or water.</li></ol>







	<p><b>The rest of the night</b></p> <p>Stay near the toilet. The medicine helps clean your bowel for the exam and causes bowel movements that can be sudden.</p> <p><b>Try to drink 8 ounces of clear liquids each hour you are awake.</b></p>
<p><b>The day of your exam</b></p> 	<p>Take your heart or blood pressure medicines with water.</p> <p><b>5 hours before your arrival time</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drink the rest of the bowel prep mixture.</li> </ol>  <p><b>Stop drinking clear liquids 3 hours before your arrival time.</b></p> <p>Don't drink alcohol the whole day.</p>



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# How to Do a Split-Dose Bowel Prep with Sutab

<p><b>2 to 3 days before your exam</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Pick up your Sutab bowel prep prescription at your pharmacy.</li><li>2. Buy any clear liquids you want for your prep days – a list is on page 5.</li></ol>
<p><b>The day before your exam</b></p> 	<p>In the morning you may eat a banana and white toast. After that, you can only have clear liquids and 2 Saltine crackers to help with nausea – <b>you cannot eat any other solid food</b>. Don't drink alcohol.</p> <p><b>Between 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.</b></p> <p>Drink an extra 8 ounces of clear liquids each hour.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not take oral medicines within 1 hour of starting each dose of Sutab.</li><li>• If you take tetracycline or fluoroquinolone antibiotics, iron, digoxin, chlorpromazine, or penicillamine, take these medicines at least 2 hours before and not less than 6 hours after each dose of Sutab.</li></ul> <p><b>At 5:00 pm</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Open 1 bottle of 12 Sutab tablets.</li><li>2. Fill the container provided with 16 ounces of water – up to the fill line. Swallow each tablet with a sip of water. Drink the rest of the water over 15 to 20 minutes.</li></ol> <p>If you feel bloated, cramping or nausea (sick to your stomach), pause or slow down your drinking until your symptoms lessen.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. About 1 hour after taking the last tablet, fill the container again with 16 ounces of water. Drink all of the water within 30 minutes.</li><li>4. About 30 minutes after you finish drinking the second container or water, fill it again with 16 ounces of water. Drink all of the water within 30 minutes.</li></ol>

	<p><b>The rest of the night</b></p> <p>Stay near the toilet. The medicine helps clean your bowel for the exam and causes bowel movements that can be sudden.</p> <p><b>Try to drink 8 ounces of clear liquids each hour you are awake.</b></p>
<p><b>The day of your exam</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your heart or blood pressure medicines with water.</li> <li>• Do not take oral medicines within 1 hour of starting each dose of Sutab.</li> <li>• If you take tetracycline or fluoroquinolone antibiotics, iron, digoxin, chlorpromazine, or penicillamine, take these medicines at least 2 hours before and not less than 6 hours after each dose of Sutab.</li> </ul> <p><b>6 hours before your arrival time</b></p>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open the second bottle of 12 Sutab tablets.</li> <li>2. Fill the container provided with 16 ounces of water – up to the fill line. Swallow each tablet with a sip of water. Drink the rest of the water over 15 to 20 minutes. <p>If you feel bloated, cramping or nausea (sick to your stomach), pause or slow down your drinking until your symptoms lessen.</p> </li> <li>3. About 1 hour after taking the last tablet, fill the container again with 16 ounces of water. Drink all of the water within 30 minutes.</li> <li>4. About 30 minutes after you finish drinking the second container or water, fill it again with 16 ounces of water. Drink all of the water within 30 minutes.</li> </ol> <p><b>Stop drinking clear liquids 3 hours before your arrival time.</b></p> <p>Don't drink alcohol the whole day.</p>



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