



FAQ's for Colonoscopy

Q: Why must I avoid red liquids and red Jell-O?

A: The food dyes commonly used in these items can stain the lining of the colon to reddish or "blood colored" hue and red Jell-O can appear to look like clots of blood to the eye.

Q: Is it OK to drink clear alcoholic beverages?

A: No! Do not drink any alcoholic beverages during your preparation time. They can cause dehydration and may cause thinning of the blood.

Q: Can I chew gum or suck on hard candy?

A: **No!** (However, some patients find that sucking on lemon candies *only* while drinking laxative helps to make it more palatable, **this is allowed**.) Please refrain from chewing gum and sucking on hard candies four hour prior to arrival.

Q: Can I take my usual medications on the morning of my procedure?

A: You may take your medications in the morning with a small sip of water except for any medications your doctor has specifically instructed you NOT to take. These medications will be identified on your prep instruction sheet. If you are on blood pressure medications it is very important for you to take them as usual unless you have been instructed by our office not to take them. Please take any essential morning medications at least 30 minutes before you start the laxative if having a colonoscopy.

Q: How long will my procedure last?

A: A procedure is typically 10 - 30 minutes long and depending on your circumstances you will be at our office approximately 1 ½ hours total from check in-time to discharge time.

Q: What should I wear?

A: Please wear comfortable clothes that are easily removable and shoes with no high heels. Short sleeve t-shirts are recommended.

Q: I have facial piercings – why do I need to remove them?

A: For your safety, and due to rare breathing emergencies, piercings of nose, mouth, lips, and tongue will need to be removed before procedure.

Q: I have a cold, upper respiratory virus, sinus congestion, or mild cough. Can I still have my procedure?

A: You should allow 2-4 weeks for your symptoms (cough, congestion, sore throat, post-nasal drip, etc.) to fully resolve to reduce risks related to being sedated. Recent significant or severe respiratory illness or symptoms should be discussed with medical staff for appropriate guidance and adjustments.

Q: Do I really need to drink all of the laxative prep?

A: Yes! Finish the entire dose. The colon is approximately 6 feet long regardless of your height or weight, and requires a lot of liquid to clean it out. If you do not drink the entire prep you run the risk of having residual stool in your colon which affects the doctor's ability to see and remove all polyps that may be present. If this occurs, the doctor may have you repeat the procedure right away or come back early for your next procedure as a polyp may be missed due to poor preparation. (Your insurance company may or may not pay for this repeat procedure.)

Q: When can I expect the laxative to start working?

A: Bowel movements often occur about 1 hour after starting the first part of your laxative, but may not occur for up to 8 hours for some people. Bowel movements will start to loosen and continue

for approximately 1 to 8 hours after you finish your laxative. A feeling of bloating or nausea may occur due to the large volume of fluids and this is usually temporary and will disappear once bowel movements begin. If you have had no significant bowel movement by 10pm the night before your procedure, please call the physician on call.

Q: Why do I have to stay on clear liquids for so long?

A: Your body will not form stool while on a clear liquid diet. This diet, in addition to the laxative, will help your body in the cleansing process and may help to minimize your time in the bathroom. It is very important to adhere strictly to the clear liquid diet the day before as well as the day of your procedure.

Q: My friend was given pills to take for their prep. Why can't I get those?

A: Your doctor determined that the prep you were given is the best for you based on your individual health status, which includes your lab results and medical history.

Q: Why do I need to stop eating seeds and nuts and limit my fiber for 5 days before my procedure?

A: Seeds found in berries, tomatoes and cucumbers, as well as foods like corn, popcorn, nuts, quinoa and granola adhere to the wall of the colon and are harder for the laxatives to do their work in cleansing the colon. The doctors can use suction with our scopes if needed for extra liquids left behind, but seeds, nuts, corn, popcorn and granola can clog the suction capability of the scopes. Limiting your intake of high-fiber foods 5 days before your procedure will also assist in the cleansing process. Limit raw fruits and vegetables, whole grain or multi-grain products, bran or other bulking agents. This includes fiber supplements (powdered and tablet form). Be assured we will not cancel your procedure if you forget and have a small amount in the 5 days before your procedure, but please be careful to try to keep them out of your diet as best you can.

Q: Is it common to get cold or have the shivers during the prep?

A: Yes. This can happen due to the large amounts of cold fluid that you will drink in a short amount of time. This can be avoided

by using room temperature water to mix the laxative, and dress warmly during this time.

Q: What if I have rectal discomfort with continuous trips to the bathroom?

A: You may apply a water-based product to the rectal area during the prep. Please do not use petroleum-based creams or ointments as these products can affect visualization through the camera lens of the scope during your procedure. "Balneol" brand lotion is available over the counter as a cleanser/cream that we recommend if needed. It is found in the hemorrhoid product section of your pharmacy or grocery store. Moist baby wipes may also be used for cleansing instead of toilet paper as they are less abrasive.

Q: What if I vomit, or feel like I am going to vomit while drinking the prep?

A: Stop drinking the prep for 30 minutes until symptoms have decreased or gone away and then start drinking the prep again. If you vomit large portions of the bowel prep, please call the physician on call.

Q: I already have diarrhea! Do I still need to take the laxatives?

A: Yes. You must still take the prep as directed by your doctor. Your entire colon must be emptied out in order for your doctor to see it clearly.

Q: How will I know I am cleaned out?

A: Your bowel movements will be a yellow or clear liquid only, with no particles of stool, similar to the appearance of urine.

Q: Is it OK to have the colonoscopy during my menstrual cycle?

A: Yes, the procedure can still be performed while menstruating.