

# Colonoscopy, Adult

A colonoscopy is a procedure to look at the entire large intestine. This procedure is done using a long, thin, flexible tube that has a camera on the end.

You may have a colonoscopy:

- As a part of normal colorectal screening.
- If you have certain symptoms, such as:
  - A low number of red blood cells in your blood (anemia).
  - Diarrhea that does not go away.
  - Pain in your abdomen.
  - Blood in your stool.

A colonoscopy can help screen for and diagnose medical problems, including:

- An abnormal growth of cells or tissue (tumor).
- Abnormal growths within the lining of your intestine (polyps).
- Inflammation.
- Areas of bleeding.

## **Tell your health care provider about:**

- Any allergies you have.
- All medicines you are taking, including vitamins, herbs, eye drops, creams, and over-the-counter medicines.
- Any problems you or family members have had with anesthetic medicines.
- Any bleeding problems you have.
- Any surgeries you have had.
- Any medical conditions you have.
- Any problems you have had with having bowel movements.
- Whether you are pregnant or may be pregnant.

## **What are the risks?**

Generally, this is a safe procedure. However, problems may occur, including:

- Bleeding.
- Damage to your intestine.
- Allergic reactions to medicines given during the procedure.
- Infection. This is rare.

## **What happens before the procedure?**

### **Eating and drinking restrictions**

Follow instructions from your health care provider about eating or drinking restrictions, which may include:

- A few days before the procedure:
  - Follow a low-fiber diet.
  - Avoid nuts, seeds, dried fruit, raw fruits, and vegetables.
- 1–3 days before the procedure:
  - Eat only gelatin dessert or ice pops.

- Drink only clear liquids, such as water, clear juice, clear broth or bouillon, black coffee or tea, or clear soft drinks or sports drinks.
- Avoid liquids that contain red or purple dye.
- The day of the procedure:
  - **Do not** eat solid foods. You may continue to drink clear liquids until up to 2 hours before the procedure.
  - **Do not** eat or drink anything starting 2 hours before the procedure, or within the time period that your health care provider recommends.

## Bowel prep

If you were prescribed a bowel prep to take by mouth (orally) to clean out your colon:

- Take it as told by your health care provider. Starting the day before your procedure, you will need to drink a large amount of liquid medicine. The liquid will cause you to have many bowel movements of loose stool until your stool becomes almost clear or light green.
- If your skin or the opening between the buttocks (anus) gets irritated from diarrhea, you may relieve the irritation using:
  - Wipes with medicine in them, such as adult wet wipes with aloe and vitamin E.
  - A product to soothe skin, such as petroleum jelly.
- If you vomit while drinking the bowel prep:
  - Take a break for up to 60 minutes.
  - Begin the bowel prep again.
  - Call your health care provider if you keep vomiting or you cannot take the bowel prep without vomiting.
- To clean out your colon, you may also be given:
  - Laxative medicines. These help you have a bowel movement.
  - Instructions for enema use. An enema is liquid medicine injected into your rectum.

## Medicines

Ask your health care provider about:

- Changing or stopping your regular medicines or supplements. This is especially important if you are taking iron supplements, diabetes medicines, or blood thinners.
- Taking medicines such as aspirin and ibuprofen. These medicines can thin your blood. **Do not** take these medicines unless your health care provider tells you to take them.
- Taking over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbs, and supplements.

## General instructions

- Ask your health care provider what steps will be taken to help prevent infection. These may include washing skin with a germ-killing soap.
- If you will be going home right after the procedure, plan to have a responsible adult:
  - Take you home from the hospital or clinic. You will not be allowed to drive.
  - Care for you for the time you are told.

## What happens during the procedure?



- An IV will be inserted into one of your veins.
- You will be given a medicine to make you fall asleep (general anesthetic).
- You will lie on your side with your knees bent.
- A lubricant will be put on the tube. Then the tube will be:
  - Inserted into your anus.
  - Gently eased through all parts of your large intestine.
- Air will be sent into your colon to keep it open. This may cause some pressure or cramping.
- Images will be taken with the camera and will appear on a screen.
- A small tissue sample may be removed to be looked at under a microscope (biopsy). The tissue may be sent to a lab for testing if any signs of problems are found.
- If small polyps are found, they may be removed and checked for cancer cells.
- When the procedure is finished, the tube will be removed.

The procedure may vary among health care providers and hospitals.

## What happens after the procedure?

- Your blood pressure, heart rate, breathing rate, and blood oxygen level will be monitored until you leave the hospital or clinic.
- You may have a small amount of blood in your stool.
- You may pass gas and have mild cramping or bloating in your abdomen. This is caused by the air that was used to open your colon during the exam.
- If you were given a sedative during the procedure, it can affect you for several hours. **Do not** drive or operate machinery until your health care provider says that it is safe.
- It is up to you to get the results of your procedure. Ask your health care provider, or the department that is doing the procedure, when your results will be ready.

## Summary

- A colonoscopy is a procedure to look at the entire large intestine.
- Follow instructions from your health care provider about eating and drinking before the procedure.
- If you were prescribed an oral bowel prep to clean out your colon, take it as told by your health care provider.
- During the colonoscopy, a flexible tube with a camera on its end is inserted into the anus and then passed into all parts of the large intestine.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

## COLONOSCOPY PREP INSTRUCTIONS

### **Medication Instructions**

**STOP** Aspirin and Coumadin or other blood thinners **7 days** prior to your procedure, **with approval from your Primary Care Physician**.

**STOP** Anti-inflammatory drugs (Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Naprosyn, Feldene, Celebrex, Ibuprofen, etc..) and iron tablets **5 days** prior to your procedure.

Check with your Primary Care Physician regarding these and any other medications that you take to ensure that is medically right for you.

### **Diet** Two days prior to your colonoscopy: Low residue diet

1. **Allowed to eat:** soup, fish, chicken, eggs, white rice, bread, crackers, plain yogurt, pasta, potato without skin, gelatin, bouillon, all liquids
2. **Avoid eating:** fresh fruit, dried fruit, all vegetables, raisins, nuts, seeds, any meat other than listed above

### **One day prior to Colonoscopy: Only Liquids**

This is the Prep day, only liquids are allowed until the procedure is completed. Consumption of anything other than CLEAR Liquids will impair the quality of the prep and thus impair the quality and safety of the colonoscopy. You may have clear liquids up to 6 hours prior to your colonoscopy. Take nothing by mouth for 6 hours prior to the colonoscopy without approval by surgery staff.

- **Allowed Liquids:** Clear liquid diet is liquid you can see through. This includes water, fruit juices, Jell-O, clear broth or bouillon, clear soda, Gatorade, sports drinks, popsicles.
- **Please consume plenty of clear liquids!** A colonoscopy prep can cause dehydration and loss of electrolytes.
- **Avoid:** All solid foods, milk or milk products and any item with red or purple dye. LIMIT coffee and tea as they can dehydrate you.

### **Shopping List:**

1. One 64 ounce or two 32-ounce bottles of **Gatorade, Propel or Crystal Lite** or other noncarbonated clear liquid drink. NO red, purple or orange.
  - a. \*If you are diabetic then you may use sugar free product.
2. **Dulcolax laxative tablets** (not suppository or stool softener) and you will need 6 tablets for the prep. Store brands of these are available, and they will cost a little less. You may use the store brands just make sure you have the right products.
3. **MiraLAX** 238 grams (8.3 ounces) or generic polyethylene glycol

**One day before the Colonoscopy:** begin the colon prep as detailed below

1. In the morning, in a pitcher mix the 8.3 ounces of MiraLAX with the 64 ounces of Gatorade. Stir or shake the contents until completely dissolved. Chill if desired. You may use any flavor but NO red, purple or orange. You may use a low-calorie sports drink. DO NOT USE CARBONATED BEVERAGE.
2. At 1 PM take 3 Dulcolax laxative tablets with water by mouth.
3. At 3 PM drink half of the MiraLAX/Gatorade mixture. Drink 8 ounces every 15 minutes.
4. At 9 PM drink the other half of the solution. Drink 8 ounces every 15 minutes until all of solution is finished.
5. At 10 PM take the other 3 tablets of Dulcolax.

**If you are diabetic:**

1. Use sugar free drinks during the prep and monitor blood sugar closely to prevent low blood sugar and use insulin sliding scale if needed for high values.
2. If you are on insulin, take HALF of your usual evening dose the day prior to the colonoscopy \*unless instructed otherwise by doctor\*
3. Hold your diabetic medication the morning of test if you take pills or insulin

**Helpful tips:**

1. Some people may develop nausea with vomiting during the prep. The best remedy for this is to take a break from drinking the solution for about 30 minutes and then resume drinking at a slower rate. It is important to drink the entire contents of the solution.
2. Walking between drinking each glass can help bloating.
3. Use baby wipes instead of toilet paper.
4. Apply some Vaseline or Desitin to the anal area/ between buttock prior to beginning the prep and reapply as needed.
5. Remain close to the toilet as multiple bowel movements will occur. This prep often works within 30 minutes but may take as long as three hours.

**Day of Procedure:**

1. If you take blood pressure or heart medication you may take it with a sip of water.
2. You may have clear liquids up to 6 hours prior to the scheduled procedure time.
3. Wear loose comfortable clothing. Leave jewelry and valuables at home.
4. Bring a list of all your current medications.
5. You **MUST** have a responsible adult driver to take you home after the procedure!