

IMPORTANT - READ YOUR INSTRUCTIONS 5 DAYS IN ADVANCE

GETTING READY FOR YOUR COLONOSCOPY

1. **Medications:** You are required to stop taking blood thinners and aspirin for **5 days** in advance of your procedure. This includes Advil, Aleve, Motrin, ibuprofen, any aspirin product, baby aspirin, Coumadin, Plavix, Aggrenox, Ticlid, Persantine, etc. **If your doctor or cardiologist has given you any of these medications for cardiac reasons or history of stroke, you should check with them to see if it's OK to stop. If you have a Cardiac Stent, please advise our office before stopping medications.** Tylenol may be used if needed. Continue your other medications, such as blood pressure pills, heart medication, asthma inhalers, eye drops etc. If you are unsure of your medications, check with your regular doctor or pharmacist. Some things can wait to take during your procedure and preparation day such as vitamins, calcium tablets, etc. **Diabetics** please call your regular doctor for instructions on taking your insulin or blood sugar medications as dosing may be changed while only on clear liquids. If you usually do blood sugar checks at home, continue those.

2. **Bowel Preparations - the laxative part:** Not all of the information here pertains to every patient. If you don't have the gallon prep then disregard the gallon prep information, etc. Be sure to follow our written instructions, not the ones on the product bottle. We understand your neighbor or co-worker may have had a different preparation which sounds so much easier and must be better than what we gave you. Some preparations are hard on your kidneys or not appropriate for you personally. The goal is to have a clean colon to see all abnormalities and polyps. We do not want to miss the bad stuff!! Even a small amount of stool could be hiding a tiny polyp. Follow your directions to the letter (no cheating.)

Remember, the preparation is a laxative. Be near a bathroom. You will want to be at home unless you are very comfortable with your co-workers. You will want to have plenty of soft toilet paper and even some Desitin ointment or Vaseline if your frequent trips to the bathroom leave you a little "sore". If using the gallon prep, it starts to work rather quickly. If using the Docolax (5mg) tablets and/or the Magnesium Citrate they may take several hours to start working, but remember you could be the exception. I wouldn't recommend being on the beltway in traffic.

If you are using a preparation that comes with flavor packs, any may be used including cherry. Be prepared to drink the preparation both the night before and the remaining liter the morning before your colonoscopy according to your instructions. This may seem like a lot but really is necessary. An inadequately clean colon may hide a polyp. If the procedure needs to be repeated, the second time around the preparation is more extensive. All preparations do require adequate liquids/hydration to work their best so drink up! If you have a long way to drive to get to your colonoscopy or have a very early appointment, you may drink the morning dose of your preparation earlier in the morning than indicated. Remember, NOTHING BY MOUTH 4 HOURS PRIOR TO YOUR COLONOSCOPY.

Hints: To help you get through drinking that big, huge, enormous gallon preparation or just help manage any prep that has a large amount of liquids to drink. Speaking from experience, it was not my favorite cocktail but I did drink it all. Try using a straw, drink steadily, don't sip, and sit up at a table as you may feel full at times. If you need a short break in between glasses, take one. Visit the bathroom, walk around a bit then start again. Try not to drag it out too long. It works best when done within three hours. If you become nauseous or vomit take a 30 minute break and then begin again.

3. **Clear Liquid Diet:** Once you begin the clear liquid diet as indicated on your instructions, you will not return to your regular diet (solid foods) until after your procedure. Sometimes drinking the chicken or beef broth feels more like a meal and can be somewhat satisfying (Very tasty, comes in a can, Swanson brand is excellent) Have as much as you want of the clear liquids and be sure to **drink plenty to stay hydrated**. No red liquids allowed. No need to double check with the office, green is ok, orange is ok, lemon is ok, tea, coffee without creamers, sodas, etc Ok, Ok, Ok. Sugar is fine to use, you may chew gum or have hard candy that is not red. Just one CLEAR alcohol beverage may be enjoyed if desired. Gatorade, Propel or Pedialyte drinks can help replenish electrolytes and assist in keeping you hydrated. You will be on your clear liquid diet the entire preparation day(s). Drink lots but do not eat that day even if you think it won't matter to eat breakfast or brunch since perhaps your colonoscopy is not until late morning or in the afternoon and surely that must mean you can have a little breakfast on your preparation day? **No**, please don't eat, just clear liquids to ensure the best, clear, clean view of your colon. Necessary medications are OK early in the morning the day of your procedure.

4. **The Hospital:** Your procedure will take approximately 30 minutes. Your ride should be available about an hour after your procedure time. They are encouraged to stay at the hospital or Endoscopy Center and wait for you. Both hospitals have a cafeteria, Starbucks and gift shop. Your instruction sheet has the time you should arrive, where to park and where to go. Bring your insurance card, photo ID, and a list of your medications with you. Your belongings will stay with you the entire time at the hospital but leave your valuables and jewelry at home. You will need a responsible adult to drive you home. You may only take a taxi if you have a responsible adult with you.

5. **Travel:** We do not recommend long distance travel, especially flying, for at least 3 days after your procedure. Plan your schedule accordingly.

6. **Results:** When your report is ready your doctor will review your results. The doctor or the nurse will call or send you results in the mail. We understand our phones are very busy and we **try** to call you sooner than later. We know you may be anxious for a report. Call the office in 10 business days if you have not received a call. **Only call the office where you were seen** (reports go to your chart location) Normal reports without biopsy or polyps removed are not called. All reports are sent to your regular physician. Urgent reports take priority and you will hear from us more quickly than the above process. Do note that doctors calling you after hours may be a "blocked call" as they sometimes call while away from the office.

7. **Office Calls:** We really do appreciate you as our patient. We know you, as do we, tend to not be fond of messaging systems. When we can't grab the phone, voice mail is our best resource. We do check messages frequently. If your doctor wants additional tests, the nurse will be ordering those and sending the order(s) to you in the mail. If you hear that long message on the phone and can't take it anymore, hit the # button to skip to the end. (I know it's long) Please try to use a land line for messages. Cell phone connections can be difficult to hear. Please, please, please spell your name on messages and tell us which of our 5 doctors you see.

8. **Need to reschedule your colonoscopy?** There are many steps in setting an appointment. Frequently other patients are waiting to grab an opening on the schedule which means time is needed for that to happen. Thanks for being sure of your schedule when setting a date and sticking to it. Oh my, if you cancel less than **5 business days** in advance or don't show up for your colonoscopy there is a charge to you not covered by your insurance (\$150.)