



COLONOSCOPY GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT: Please read these instructions as soon as possible so you have plenty of time to prepare for your scheduled colonoscopy.

Your doctor has recommended a colonoscopy — an examination of your colon (large intestine). During this procedure, a flexible tube will be inserted into your rectum and guided through your colon. If necessary, additional steps may be performed, such as taking tissue samples (biopsies) or removing polyps.

Carefully review these instructions and watch the instruction video ([\[Link\]](#)) **at least 14 days before** your procedure.

Do not follow instructions from other sources, including the insert that comes with your prescription, unless specifically directed by your healthcare provider.

- **Pick up your prescription within 5 days**, as your pharmacy may not keep the prep in stock.
- If your insurance does not cover the bowel prep kit prescribed by your provider, you may use an alternative kit covered by your insurance (per your pharmacy). Be sure to follow the instructions specific to that prep.
- Your bowel prep also includes over-the-counter medicines: **Simethicone (Gas-X®) chewable tablets, 125 mg**, and a laxative, **Dulcolax®** (not a stool softener). Please purchase Dulcolax and Simethicone (or Gas-X® Extra Strength 125 mg) separately before your colonoscopy.

If you have questions about your appointment or these instructions, contact **Harford Endoscopy Center** via Klara message at **443-785-5508** or call **410-838-6345** during business hours.

Finally, double-check your appointment date, arrival time, and location.

Harford Endoscopy Center
2214 Old Emmorton Road
Abingdon, MD 21014

If you are told that your procedure(s) are scheduled at a hospital setting:

Outpatient Surgery Department
Upper Chesapeake Medical Center
Bel Air, MD 21014

We strive to perform the safest and most careful exam for every patient. A colonoscopy may take longer for some patients than for others. As a result, your exam may not be performed at the exact time you were scheduled. We ask for your patience. Please allow at least 2 hours for your visit.

DESIGNATED DRIVER ON THE DAY OF YOUR EXAM

You will receive medicines during the exam to make you comfortable and sleepy. These medicines will be given by IV (a soft flexible tube in your arm). **YOU CANNOT DRIVE AFTER YOU RECEIVE SEDATION.** You must have a responsible adult 18 years or older with a valid driver's license who is on site through your entire procedure.

- This adult must stay with you for several hours after your exam.
- **If your companion does not stay on site, you will be asked to reschedule your exam.**



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- You may not go home alone in a/an Uber/Lyft, taxi, shuttle, van or bus. The drivers will not be responsible for you.
- You may not drive or make any important decisions after the procedure for the rest of the day.

SPECIAL MEDICINE INSTRUCTIONS

The day of your exam, please bring a list of your current medicines, the doses, and the last time you took.

FOLLOW THESE MEDICINE CHANGE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE YOUR EXAM:

- ❖ If you take the following medications, including Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®), Apixaban (Eliquis®), Dabigatran (Pradaxa®), Warfarin (Coumadin®), Clopidogrel (Plavix®), Ticagrelor (Brilinta®), Prasugrel (Effient®), or similar medication, please notify your healthcare prescriber regarding specific medications for instructions on when to stop these medications.
- ❖ You will continue your blood pressure and heart medication (except blood thinners (below table 1), inhalers, or aspirin).
- ❖ If you have diabetes and are on medication, your diabetes medication may need to be adjusted. In general, please follow these guidelines:
 - **Oral Medicine** ("sugar pill"): Do not take the day of your exam unless otherwise instructed.
 - **Insulin**: Please take ½ dose of insulin the morning of your procedure. Patients with insulin pumps need to bring their prescribed off-pump instructions.
 - **Check your blood sugar in the morning of your exam.**
 - **Important tips to prevent low blood sugar**: During the clear liquid day, drink protein. A good source of protein is clear chicken, beef, or vegetable broth. Keep glucose tablets on hand for any sudden drop of blood sugar. These are available over the counter in diabetic supplies at any pharmacy.
- **GLP-1 agonists** include Ozempic, Wegovy, Zepbound, Mounjaro, Rybelsus, Trulicity, Victoza, Saxenda, Bydureon, Byetta, etc. (usually used for diabetes control or weight loss).
 - If you take it weekly, stop 7 days before the procedure.
 - If you take oral **GLP-1 agonists** daily, stop one day before the procedure.
 - Your procedure could be cancelled if you do not follow the instructions. Please notify your prescribing provider regarding this plan.

If you have any questions about your medicines, call the healthcare provider who writes your prescriptions.

IF YOU HAD DIFFICULTY WITH BOWEL PREP BEFORE OR SUFFER A CHRONIC CONSTIPATION (3 OR LESS BOWEL MOVEMENTS PER WEEK), PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR PROVIDER. YOU MAY NEED SPECIAL BOWEL PREP INSTRUCTIONS.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

For your best bowel preparation result, you are required to follow the instructions on your diet

1. Three (3) days before your colonoscopy, **STOP** eating the following

- All raw fruits and vegetables
- All fruits and vegetables with seeds (cucumbers, tomatoes, strawberries)
- Nuts
- Popcorn
- Seeds (i.e. flax and chia seeds)
- Whole grains/beans
- Quinoa



2. You should modify your diet **to LOW FIBER DIET** (see attached table 2)

- all cooked fruits, vegetables without seeds
- Eggs
- Milk
- Noodles
- Poultry and fish
- Skinless potatoes
- White bread
- White rice



3. **One (1) day before, STOP all solid foods, you are only allowed to have clears**

- Water/coconut water
- Black coffee/ tea without cream or milk
- Sports drinks such as Gatorade
- Clear vegetable or chicken or beef both
- Clear juice such as pear juice, apple juice or grape juice
- Gelatin or popsicles



Avoid any red, purple drinks or pulpy drinks



Table 2. Low Residue (Low Fiber) Diet

Foods Group	Foods Allowed
Milk and dairy	Milk and milk products. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cow's milk • ice cream • yogurt • cheese • cream
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coffee and tea, carbonated beverages, Kool-Aid or Hi-C (no red or purple) • apple juice, strained juice, tomato juice, fruit drinks without pulp, such as fruit punch • bottled water • nutritional supplements without added fiber, such as Boost or Ensure
Breads, cereals, and starches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refined breads, rolls, bagels, English muffins, pita, bread, biscuits, muffins, crackers, pancakes, waffles, or pastry • refined cooked and cold cereals such as hominy grits, farina, cream of wheat or rice, strained oatmeal, Cheerios, Corn/Rice Chex, Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Special K • potato and sweet potato without skin, white rice • refined pasta
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • canned or cooked fruit without skins or seeds (peaches, pears, apricots, apples) • applesauce • ripe banana • jellied cranberry sauce
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tender, well-cooked fresh, canned and frozen • vegetables without seeds such as peeled carrots, green beans, and beets • strained vegetable juice • strained tomato juice
Meat and meat substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooked, tender fish, poultry, beef, lamb, pork, ham, veal, organ meats • eggs, cheese, tofu, tuna fish • smooth peanut butter and other smooth nut butters
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salt, sugar, ground or flaked herbs and spices, vinegar, soy sauce • ketchup and mustard • jelly (but not jam or preserves)

BOWEL PREP KIT FOR COLONOSCOPY

Several types of bowel preparation kits are commercially available through pharmacies, and you will need a prescription from your provider to obtain them. Common options include:

- **Polyethylene glycol–electrolyte solutions** (e.g., GoLYTELY®, NuLYTELY®, TriLyte®)
- **Low-volume PEG with ascorbic acid** (e.g., Moviprep®, Plenvu®)
- **Sodium sulfate–based tablets or solutions** (e.g., Sutab®, Suprep® Bowel Prep Kit)
- **Sodium picosulfate with magnesium oxide and citric acid** (e.g., Prepopik®, Clenpiq®)

Insurance plans often cover at least one type of bowel prep, but the preferred product and co-pay can vary by plan and pharmacy. If the one recommended by your provider is not fully covered, your pharmacy or care team can usually suggest an alternative or help you request prior authorization.

Be sure to follow **our preparation instructions** carefully—whichever product you use—to ensure your colon is cleaned effectively and safely. Please **do not rely on the directions printed on the kit label**, as they may differ from the plan your provider has tailored for you.

If you are unable to obtain one of the prescription bowel-prep kits, an alternative is the **Miralax® prep**. Detailed step-by-step instructions for this option are available on our website.

Take two tablets of Dulcolax around 12:00pm, you are expecting have some bowel movements in the afternoon. If you do NOT have any significant bowel movement by 5:00pm, you can repeat taking another two tablets.

A successful colon prep will cause you to have clear yellow (“tea-colored”) liquid stools (see picture below). Please finish your preparation regardless of your stool color. You may drink more water or clear liquids to keep you hydrated.

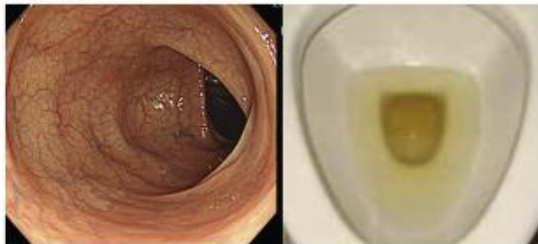
Picture A: GOOD PREP



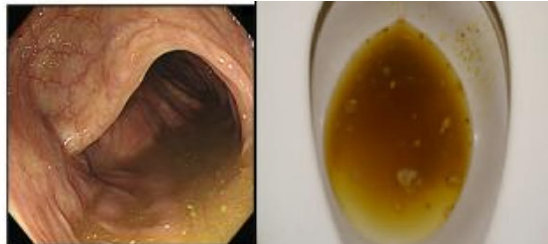
Picture B: POOR PREP



A



B





Colonoscopy Bowel Prep — Frequently Asked Questions

1. What clear liquids can I have? (Nothing red or purple)

You may drink:

- Water (plain, carbonated, or flavored)
- Fruit juices without pulp (e.g., apple or white grape)
- Lemonade or limeade
- Carbonated drinks, including dark sodas (cola, root beer)
- Gelatin without fruit or vegetables
- Tea or coffee (no milk or cream)
- Sports drinks (e.g., Gatorade)
- Clear broth (chicken, beef, or vegetable)
- Ice pops without milk, fruit bits, seeds, or nuts

2. Can I have chicken soup?

Only the broth — no noodles, meat, or vegetables.

3. Can I have applesauce, yogurt, or pudding?

No. These are not considered clear liquids.

4. What is the best clear liquid?

Gatorade is an excellent choice because it contains electrolytes like potassium. Clear bouillon or chicken broth are also good options.

5. Can I have alcoholic beverages?

No. Alcohol can dehydrate you and thin your blood.

6. Why avoid red or purple liquids?

These colors may remain in the colon and look like blood during your exam.

7. I accidentally drank something red or purple. Can I still have my procedure?

Yes. Continue your prep and let the staff know when you arrive.

8. Some of my pills are red. Can I take them?

Yes. Take heart, blood pressure, and time-sensitive medications as prescribed (unless told otherwise).

9. What if I forgot to stop my aspirin?

Notify your doctor. Colonoscopies usually don't need to be rescheduled if aspirin was not stopped.



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10. What if I forgot to stop Coumadin or other blood thinners?

Your procedure will need to be rescheduled.

11. Can I take my anxiety or depression medications?

Yes, up to two hours before you arrive.

12. Can I take my supplements up until the day of the procedure?

Yes, until bedtime the night before. Stop iron supplements two days before.

13. I was told to stop anti-inflammatories or blood thinners. What can I take for pain?

You may take Tylenol as directed.

14. Can I proceed if I'm on antibiotics?

Usually yes, but inform your provider. If taking antibiotics for diverticulitis, your colonoscopy must wait six weeks after your last dose.

15. Do I need a prescription for the laxatives?

Some preps (SuPrep, NuLYTELY) require a prescription. Miralax is over the counter.

16. I'm allergic to sulfa. Can I take the prep?

Yes. Sulfa and sulfates are not the same.

17. The pharmacy didn't have my prescription. What should I do?

- During office hours (8 AM–4 PM): Call our office for assistance.
- After hours: Call and ask for the on-call doctor to send your prescription.

18. I lost my prep instructions. What should I do?

Visit www. → *Services* → *Colonoscopy*. Or call our office.

19. When do I start the clear liquid diet?

Start in the morning of the day before your procedure.

20. Can I start the bowel prep earlier than 5 PM?

Yes, 1–2 hours earlier is fine if you follow a clear liquid diet.

21. Can I drink all of my prep the night before instead of splitting it?

No. Split doses (evening + morning) give the best results and reduce the chance of repeating the test.

22. How can I make the prep taste better?

Chill it, use a straw, and rinse your mouth with water or mouthwash. Don't mix anything unless instructed.



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23. I feel nauseous. What should I do?

Pause for 30–60 minutes, then sip slowly. Finish the prep.

24. I vomited. What now?

- If less than half the prep was lost: Continue.
- If more than half: Try an over-the-counter prep (e.g., Miralax®). Instructions are online.
- If unable: Call when the office opens at 7:30 am to cancel.

25. Can I mix Miralax with something other than Gatorade?

Yes — water, Propel, Pedialyte, or Crystal Light. Avoid soda.

26. I already have diarrhea. Do I still need the prep?

Yes. Your colon is six feet long and must be fully cleaned.

27. My stool is clear before I finish the prep. Do I still take it all?

Yes. Your body keeps producing fluid that must be cleared.

28. I took the first dose but no bowel movement yet.

It can take up to three hours. Keep following instructions.

29. I finished the prep but haven't gone yet.

If no bowel movement three hours after your second dose

30. My stool is yellow. Is that OK?

Yes, if you can see the bottom of the toilet.

31. My stool is yellow with flecks. Is that OK?

Yes, a few flecks are fine.

32. My stool is still brown the morning of the test.

Call the Center at 410-838-6345 for further instructions.

33. My bottom is sore. What can I do?

Pat gently with a damp cloth and use ointments (Vaseline, A&D, Desitin, Preparation H).

34. My procedure is during my period. Is that OK?

Yes. Use a tampon if possible, otherwise a pad. Inform the nurse.

35. What if I have a cold, cough, rash, or open wound?

Call us as soon as possible. Fever, rash, wounds, or breathing issues on the day of your procedure require rescheduling.



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36. Can I brush my teeth?

Yes, but don't swallow water.

37. Can I chew gum or suck on candy the morning of the procedure?

No. Avoid these for six hours beforehand.

38. Can I wear my dentures?

Yes, but you may need to remove them before the procedure.

39. What time should I arrive?

Please arrive at the time indicated on your procedure information sheet, unless the center has instructed you to come at a different time.

40. How do I cancel my procedure?

Call us. After hours, leave a message with the answering service.

41. What if I have chronic constipation?

Tell our schedulers before prep — you may need a special regimen.

42. What is Cologuard?

Cologuard is a stool-based test that looks for blood or DNA from precancerous or cancer cells. It is **not** a colonoscopy and is less effective at detecting cancer or polyps, which can only be removed during a colonoscopy.

43. What if I can't afford my prep?

Call our office to discuss alternatives. You may need another pharmacy trip or office visit.