

MORNING COLONOSCOPY PREPARATION

What is a colonoscopy

A procedure in which a flexible tube with a camera at the tip is passed through the rectum into the colon. It allows the doctor to inspect the large intestine, take samples and remove polyps.

How to prepare for your colonoscopy

You must empty your bowel of all waste material by taking bowel preparation. Bowel preparation is medication that causes diarrhoea.

What bowel preparation to purchase

3 Dulcolax tablets **and** 3 sachets of Pico Prep. Purchase from a pharmacy. A prescription is not required.

Good Bowel Preparation

Good bowel preparation allows the doctor to clearly see the lining of the bowel. Once you complete the preparation described overleaf, you should be passing clear to yellow coloured liquid diarrhoea like this:



Image: Optimal colour of diarrhoea with good bowel preparation



Image: Lining of the bowel with good bowel preparation

Poor bowel preparation

If the bowel is not completely clean and empty your procedure may have to be repeated. Potential complications can also occur, or small cancers could be missed. It is important that you finish taking all of your bowel preparation. Sometimes your diarrhoea can go clear, then brown again, before it clears again to a lemon coloured fluid.



Image: Colour of diarrhoea with poor bowel preparation



Image: Bowel lining not adequately clean

The preparation can cause abdominal cramps or bloating. A hot pack, walking, or simple analgesia such as paracetamol can provide relief. If you experience symptoms that prevent you from completing your bowel preparation, contact the Endoscopy for advice.

During your colonoscopy

Before the procedure a light anaesthetic (sedative) is given. You may be slightly aware of what is going on in the room, but generally you won't remember anything. A colonoscopy usually takes between 20 and 45 minutes. Once sedated and lying on your left side, the doctor inserts the colonoscope through the anus and guides it in to your colon.

If polyps are found during the procedure they will usually be removed using tiny tools passed through the colonoscope. Small tissue samples may also be taken for examination.

After your colonoscopy

You may feel some bloating because of the air introduced to your bowel during the procedure. There may be a trace of blood in your first bowel action if a sample was taken or polyps were removed.

Safety and risks of a colonoscopy

Your doctor will discuss the risks of the procedure with you and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Serious complications from colonoscopy are rare, at less than one in a thousand examinations, however complications can occur such as:

- Intolerance of the bowel preparation with headaches and/or vomiting
- Reaction to the sedatives
- Perforation (a tear to the bowel lining)
- Major bleeding.









Important Information

If you are also having a gastroscopy, there is NO additional preparation required. Please follow the instructions overleaf.

- Due to the medication you will be given, you must not drive or operate machinery until the following day. **Do not drive yourself to the hospital. You must arrange for someone to pick you up and stay with you the night of your colonoscopy.**
- Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing on the day of your procedure. Remove all jewellery and body piercings before coming to hospital.
- The outcome of your procedure will be discussed with you but due to the medication given, your recollection may be cloudy. You will be given a copy of your procedure report to take home. You will need to follow up with your referring GP.
- If you have any concerns or become unwell after your procedure you should present to your nearest emergency department and take your report with you.

Preparation Instructions

You need to begin your bowel preparation the day **before** your procedure

STEP BY STEP PROCESS			Tick when complete
1 week before colonoscopy		If you are on iron tablets, stop these until after your procedure. Purchase your bowel preparation from a Pharmacy.	
3 days before colonoscopy		Avoid eating: foods with nuts and seeds (multi grain bread, muesli, chia seeds, etc.), vegetables and fruits with seeds and skins (tomato, grapes, kiwi fruit etc.)	
Day before colonoscopy		You must not eat any solid foods and you can only drink clear fluids until 5am tomorrow.	
		At 7am take all 3 Dulcolax tablets. Then make up your first mixture of Pico Prep. Empty the contents of the sachet in 250mL of warm water. Stir well, then place in the fridge to chill.	
		At 8am drink the first Pico Prep mixture. Drink over 1-2 minutes followed by 3 glasses of water. Then prepare the second mixture of Pico Prep. Empty the contents of the sachet in 250mL of warm water. Stir well, then place in the fridge to chill. Drink at least 1 glass of clear fluids every hour.	
		At 12 noon drink the second mixture of Pico Prep. Drink over 1-2 minutes followed by 3 glasses of water. Then prepare the third mixture of Pico Prep. Empty the contents of the sachet in 250mL of warm water. Stir well, then place in the fridge to chill. Drink at least 1 glass of clear fluids every hour this afternoon.	
		At 6pm drink the third mixture of Pico Prep. Drink over 1-2 minutes followed by 3 glasses of water. Continue to drink lots of clear fluids for the rest of the evening. If you wake up during the night, you can drink clear fluids, but only until 5am.	
Day of colonoscopy		From 5am you must fast from all liquids until your procedure. If you have diabetes and are on medication, DO NOT take your medication this morning, but bring it with you.	

Hints to help with your bowel preparation

- Drink lots of water throughout the preparation process
- Try chilling the mixed bowel preparation or adding some flavouring like cordial
- Drink the bowel preparation through a straw. This avoids the taste buds
- Apply Vaseline or nappy rash cream to your bottom if it gets sore
- If you feel sick, continue to sip at clear fluids or try sucking on ice chips. You can delay drinking the Pico Prep for an hour or two until nausea passes
- Try drinking a variety of clear fluids
- Avoid alcohol.

Recommended clear fluids

- Water - includes mineral and soda
- Cordial (not red)
- Sports drinks (no red or blue)
- Icy poles (not red, blue or purple)
- Black tea or coffee
- Apple juice
- Jelly (not red, blue or purple)
- Lemonade
- Beef or chicken consomme'
- Ginger ale