

COLONOSCOPY CHECKLIST

Instructions:

Attached are detailed instructions to help you prepare for your colonoscopy. Here's a checklist of things to do as you prepare for your colonoscopy. As you do each one, check it off the list by marking an "X" in each box. Make sure each box has been checked prior to coming in for your procedure.

Before you Start

- Read these instructions carefully
- Make sure you have your bowel prep. If not, call your doctor.
- Make sure you have no questions about your medications. If you do, call your doctor.
- Make sure you've made arrangements for someone to drive you home from the colonoscopy.
- See the list of foods you can eat and should avoid starting three days before the test.

One Day Before your Colonoscopy

- Breakfast – clear liquids only, no solid foods
- Lunch – clear liquids only, no solid foods
- Dinner – clear liquids only, no solid foods
- Drink plenty of clear liquids throughout the day
- Take three-fourths of the bowel prep in the evening as instructed
- If you have diabetes and take Lantus take only ½ your typical dose.

Day of your Colonoscopy

- Do not eat any solid food until after the colonoscopy.
- Take the remaining one-fourth part of bowel prep as instructed and finish no later than 2 hours before your colonoscopy appointment.
- After you complete the prep do not take any other liquid or food.
- Arrive 1 hour before the scheduled time accompanied by an adult who will be available to drive you home.
- Do not take any diabetes medicine, diuretics (e.g., Lasix), or blood pressure medicine that ends with "-pril" or "-artan."

If you have any questions or need to reschedule your exam please call 919-843-7200. If you have an urgent question between 4:00PM -7:30 AM please page the GI fellow on call at 919-966-4131.

Low fiber foods to eat while preparing for a colonoscopy include:

- White bread without nuts and seeds
- White rice, plain white pasta, and crackers
- Refined hot cereals, such as Cream of Wheat, or cold cereals with less than 1 gram of fiber per serving
- Pancakes or waffles made from white refined flour
- Fruit-flavored drinks, and flavored waters
- Meat, poultry, fish, eggs and tofu
- Milk and foods made from milk — such as yogurt, pudding, ice cream, cheeses and sour cream — if tolerated
- Butter, margarine, oils and salad dressings without seeds

Foods to avoid starting three days before the colonoscopy include:

- Whole-wheat or whole-grain breads, cereals and pasta
- Brown or wild rice and other whole grains, such as oats, kasha, barley and quinoa
- Dried fruits and prune juice
- Fruit, including those with seeds, skin or membranes, such as berries
- Vegetables
- Dried beans, peas and lentils
- Seeds and nuts and foods containing them, including peanut butter and other nut butters
- Coconut
- Popcorn
- Flax seed and psyllium

DETAILED COLONOSCOPY INSTRUCTIONS

You have been scheduled for a colonoscopy at UNC Health Care. We know it can be challenging to get ready for a colonoscopy. We also know that you may have many questions about the test. We created these instructions to help answer your questions and get you ready.

HOW DOES A COLONOSCOPY WORK?

The purpose of a colonoscopy is to look inside your large intestine (colon) for possible polyps, cancers, and other conditions. Just before the procedure starts you will receive some medicine to make you sleepy. The doctor will pass a flexible tube that has a small camera and headlight to see the inside of your colon on a TV monitor. The doctor can take biopsies of any abnormal areas, and can also remove polyps. You will wake up shortly after the test. Most people do not remember having the procedure.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET CLEAN ON THE INSIDE?

If the inside of the colon is **dirty** then your doctor may not see important things, like polyps or cancer, and may even have to do the test again. This would mean that you have to start over and come back on a different day, and nobody wants to do that.

7 DAYS BEFORE YOUR COLONOSCOPY

You should stop taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (e.g., ibuprofen), and Aspirin *unless*, it has been prescribed by a doctor.

If you take Plavix (Clopidigrel), Coumadin (Warfarin), or other blood thinning/anticoagulation medicines then you should discuss what to do with your doctor.

3rd and 2nd DAY BEFORE YOUR COLONOSCOPY

What to eat: Begin a low fiber diet. This means NO vegetables, fruits, or grains (such as whole grain bread, popcorn, or oatmeal). Lists of foods that you can eat and should avoid are included with these instructions.

Make sure that you have picked up the “bowel prep” medication that was prescribed for you.

1 DAY BEFORE YOUR COLONOSCOPY

What to eat: Do not eat any solid foods the day before your colonoscopy. Only consume clear liquids, which include clear broth, Jell-O, and popsicles.

What to drink: You must drink only clear liquids for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Be sure to drink plenty of liquids throughout the day, in addition to what is instructed in your bowel prep. Liquids you CAN drink include water, black coffee, tea, apple juice, soda pop, club soda, and sports drinks such as Gatorade (avoid red-colored). Liquids you can NOT drink include milk, orange/pineapple juice, coffee with cream, and alcohol.

Taking your "bowel prep": For your procedure we recommend a "slow split prep", which means you will take three-fourths of the prep the evening before the test, and the other one-fourth the day of the test. **In the morning you should mix and refrigerate the prep. Start taking your prep in the evening @ 5:00 PM. Drink 8 ounces every 30 minutes until you have completed three-fourths of the prep. This should take your approximately 4-5 hours.** (If drinking 8 ounces every 30 minutes is too much then slow down to every 45 minutes, though it will take you longer to complete this). After you are done we recommend drinking at least 8 ounces of clear liquid to help prevent dehydration. **Do NOT have any solid food until after the colonoscopy.**

Medications: If you have diabetes we recommend you take only one-half the dose of long acting insulin (e.g., Lantus) the night before the colonoscopy.

DAY OF COLONOSCOPY

What to eat: you must not eat any foods, suck candy, or chew gum until AFTER the colonoscopy is over.

What to drink: You may drink water, black coffee (without sugar, milk or cream), apple juice, soda pop, or club soda. Stop drinking these liquids at least 3 hours before the colonoscopy.

Medications: do NOT take any medication for diabetes, diuretics (such as lasix/furosemide), or blood pressure medicine that ends in "pril" or "artan". You may take your other medications with a small amount of liquid up to four hours before the colonoscopy.

Taking your "Prep": You should have already completed 3/4 of the prep the night before the procedure. **You must take the remaining 1/4 of your prep (again, 8 ounces every 30 minutes) starting 4 hours before the time your colonoscopy is scheduled, and finish it at least 2 hours before, even if that means having to get up very early.** We know it is

hard to get up this early, but it is very important to take the last 1/4 of your prep 4 hours before your colonoscopy in order to get the best results.

After you complete the prep do not take any other liquid or food. Arrive 60 minutes before your scheduled appointment accompanied by an adult who can drive you home after the test. Your driver is required to stay on the premises until you are ready to go home after the procedure. Please make sure you bring your hospital card and a list of your current medications. *You should expect to spend up to 4 to 5 hours in our procedures unit, longer if you are scheduled to have an additional test done on the same day.*

AFTER YOUR COLONOSCOPY

After the colonoscopy is completed we will observe you in a recovery area for approximately 30 minutes. Before you leave, the doctor will explain the results of the exam, and also give you a report and instructions. **The person who came with you must sign you out and drive you home.** You cannot drive or go back to work for at least 12 hours (unless you have a colonoscopy without sedation, which is very uncommon).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the side effects of "bowel prep"?

You will have lots of diarrhea from the bowel prep. This will start anywhere between a few minutes to 4 hours after you start the prep. You will spend a lot of time on the toilet once you start taking the prep. So plan to be home, and plan to be near a toilet. Most people have bloating and abdominal discomfort and many report feeling cold. This is normal. Do not be alarmed if you feel these symptoms. Many people have nausea. This is also normal.

Some people do not like the taste or smell of the medicine. However, it is still important that you drink all the prep as directed. Rarely some people throw up while taking the prep. If this happens, stop taking the prep and call us. Between 7:30AM – 4:30PM call 919-843-7200 (if your procedure is scheduled for UNC Hospital) or 919-843-7200 (if your procedure is scheduled for UNC at Meadowmont). Afterhours (4:30 PM – 7:30 AM) please page the GI fellow on call at 919-966-4131.

How do you know when your prep is working?

The stool coming out should be clear liquid and **without particles**. You know you're done when the stool coming out is yellow, light, liquid, and clear – like urine.

My prep hasn't started working yet. Is that OK?

Different people respond differently to the bowel prep – some people start having diarrhea within minutes of taking the prep, while others have no response for an hour or more. If you have waited more than 3 hours without a response, then it may not be working well. Be sure you are drinking enough fluid, as instructed above. If that doesn't work, take the last 1/4 of your prep and continue to drink fluids. It should work eventually. If not then call us at 919-843-7200 (7:30AM – 4:00 PM) or page the GI fellow on call at 919-966-4131 (4:00 PM – 7:30 AM) if the medicine is still not working at all despite drinking enough fluid and taking the colonoscopy prep medicine as prescribed.

What if I normally take medications?

- Aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs): stop these 7 days before the colonoscopy unless they have been prescribed by your physician.
- Plavix (Clopidogrel), Coumadin (Warfarin), and other blood thinners: discuss this with your physician.
- Diabetes medicine: if you are diabetic and take long-acting insulin (Lantus) we recommend you take only one-half of your usual dose the night before your colonoscopy. Do not take any diabetes medicine on the morning of the test. You will resume your medicines after the test.
- Blood pressure medicine: do not take any diuretics (e.g., Lasix), or blood pressure medicine that ends with “-pril” or “-artan” on the day of the colonoscopy.
- Please check with your primary doctor if you have any further questions or concerns about any medicines.

How long will the test take?

The test itself usually takes 10-30 minutes, though you should expect to spend up to 4 to 5 hours.

Can I drive myself home after my colonoscopy?

NO. You will receive medication to make you sleepy during the test. That means you cannot drive after the test and must instead arrange for someone to drive you home. Your driver must remain on the premises during the colonoscopy.