



DETAILED COLONOSCOPY INSTRUCTIONS

You have been scheduled for a colonoscopy at UNC Health Care. Please **watch our brief animated video that explains the colonoscopy preparation process, visit prep.uncgastro.com.**

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 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 low fiber foods that you can eat 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

List of 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

2 and 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 “double bowel prep”, which means you will take a total of two gallons of the bowel prep medication. You will

receive a bowel prep Rx for two (2) of the one gallon containers. Your pharmacist will hand to you two plastic jugs which have a powder in the bottom ,this is the medication. add a water or Gatorade (not red) to the fill line.

@ 6pm on Day # Two before your colonoscopy drink the first half of gallon #1. **Drink 8 ounces every 30 minutes until you have completed this portion of the prep . This should take your approximately 4-5 hours.**

@ 6 AM on the day before the colonoscopy, you will drink the remaining half of gallon #1 of the prep. Then you will mix and chill gallon #2 of the prep.

@ 6 pm the evening before the colonoscopy, drink the first half of gallon #2 of the prep.

On colonoscopy day you will need to get up early to finish the last half of gallon #2 of the prep, this will need to be done no later than two hours before the procedure time. Please allow enough time to complete the prep before you get in the car to travel to the procedural department. Remember to drink clear liquids throughout the prep process 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).You may take your other medications with a small amount of liquid up to four hours before the colonoscopy.

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 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.

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.