

Colonoscopy Frequently Asked Questions

How long is the procedure going to take?

The time from check-in to check-out is roughly 3 hours. The actual procedure takes approximately 15-30 minutes.

Can family or friends be in the room during the procedure?

No, friends and family are not allowed to watch the procedure.

Do I really need to have someone drive me home? Can I walk, or take a taxi or bus home?

You cannot drive yourself home because of the sedation you will receive, and you must be accompanied when you leave. The facilities cannot allow you to walk or take public transportation alone. We can provide you with a list of approved medical transportation services if you have no one to accompany you. If you are unable to secure transportation, we will need to reschedule your procedure.

Can I take my medications while doing my colon preparation?

If you take blood thinners (anticoagulants), weight loss, or diabetic medications, you will be given specific instructions about them. All other medications not listed on your prep instructions should be taken as usual, including the morning of your procedure.

Can I continue my herbal supplements during prep?

No, please discontinue any supplements 1 week prior to your procedure.

Should I drink fluids with my preparation?

Yes, you should drink plenty of fluids (clear liquids, not red or purple) to avoid dehydration. The more you drink, the better your prep will work and the better you will feel after the prep. Please drink plenty of fluids up to your cut off time. Please refer to your patient instructions.

I threw up my colon prep, what should I do?

If you have only vomited a small amount, it still may clean you out. Please take a break until nausea lessens then resume taking prep at a slower pace. Please finish prep at least 2 hours before the procedure. If you have vomited a large amount and your bowel movements are more than a thin yellow/clear liquid, then you will need to get magnesium citrate at the local pharmacy and take it. This is an over-the-counter product that will help remove any remaining fecal material.

What is a clear liquid?

Clear liquid is any liquid that you can see through. This does not include milk products or any juice with pulp or broth with particulate matter. Coffee is ok, but NO creamer. Avoid red fluids, even if clear, as this changes the color of the colon during the scope. See prep instructions for examples.

I accidentally ate seeds or one of the things on the list that is not allowed. Can I still do my colonoscopy?

Yes, one or two minor dietary mistakes will not ruin your colon prep, but they may interfere with the ability to see small polyps. It is very important that you strictly adhere to your dietary instructions.

I have a cold. Can I come in for my colonoscopy?

Yes. If you are feeling okay and your breathing is not compromised, you can continue with your scheduled colonoscopy. Please reschedule if you have a fever or your breathing is compromised.

The bowel preparation has worsened my hemorrhoids, or my perianal area is raw and chafed. May I use something for this?

The frequent watery bowel movements may irritate your anus. You can use over the counter remedies such as Preparation H, Anusol or Tucks pads. Calmoseptine, Vaseline, Desitin or generic zinc oxide creams can be applied to the anus and perianal skin when you start the prep to prevent rash and chafing. If you use any of these products, please DO NOT apply them the morning of your procedure.

Can you remove my hemorrhoids or treat my fissure during my colonoscopy?

No. The anal canal is not evaluated well by the colonoscope. Anal problems are best evaluated and treated in the office. Please make an office appointment if you are having anal problems.