

PREPARING FOR A COLONOSCOPY: HELPFUL HINTS

READ THIS PRIOR TO STARTING PREP

The regimen you are taking is a laxative. This type of laxative is not absorbed much – most of it passes out in the stool. This means you can safely take more if you need. The goal is to completely clean out the bowel so that all stool is gone (see photos below). This will give you a better quality of exam.

We are inspecting the lining of the colon for growths that are as small as a few millimeters. The prep is designed to give us clear vision. To achieve this it is very important to take all of it and in two split doses, or you may have to return for a retry, which no one wants. These hints will hopefully help with an optimal exam:

To prepare for the prep the following may help:

- Make plans to be near a bathroom
- Get a movie, or a good book to help pass the time
- Purchase some baby wipes, your bottom may get raw from wiping
- Add Magnesium Citrate to your purchase; it is over the counter in pharmacies, it may be necessary if the prep does not work after the first half of the prep is taken
- Things to Purchase:
 - hard candies
 - clear soups (such as broths)
 - popsicles
 - Gatorade (**just not red!**)
 - Ginger Ale in case you feel nauseated
 - Dramamine
- Start drinking the clear liquids early in the morning – the more the better before the laxative start time- this can jumpstart the prep so it will work faster
- You can try drinking a small glass of liquid every 15 minutes during the morning- it won't hurt and it could really help

COMMON QUESTIONS

I already have diarrhea- do I need to take the full prep?

Yes, the prep is still very important. Even with diarrhea there can still be stool in the colon. We need to see the lining of the colon well to perform a good exam.

What should I do if I have not had a bowel movement after completing the first portion of the prep?

The more liquids you drink with the laxative prep the more effective it is.

Try adding more clear liquids after the first dose and see if it helps.

If it has been 4 hours since completion of the first portion without a bowel movement drink the bottle of Magnesium Citrate.

What should I do if I am feeling nauseated?

The nausea usually occurs because the stomach is still full and the laxative is slow to work.

Take a break from drinking liquids and prep.

Get up and walk around.

Suck on the hard candies to get rid of the flavor.

Try sipping the Ginger Ale when you are better.

You can also try over-the-counter medications like Benadryl or Dramamine that can help with nausea.

What should I do if I vomit up the prep?

Take a break until the nausea subsides.

See the information above.

When the nausea improves, resume the prep.

You may need to drink slower.

You may need to drink other liquids such as sports drink or broth or Ginger Ale to settle the stomach.

What should I do about my regular medicines?

You can take all of your medicines the morning of the exam except for the following:

- Diabetes medication- this hopefully has been reviewed with your doctor.
- Blood thinners (Coumadin, Rivaroxiban, Dabigatran, Apixaban)- should be reviewed by your doctor or in advance with the Thrombosis or Anti-coagulation Clinic clinic.

The outcome you want is the picture on the below.

- Remember, you are going to have a scope and we need to be able to see!
- The optimal outcome is that the liquid stool looks close to what you are drinking - can have color but is clear.

Visual Colonoscopy Prep Guide



Transportation

- University of Utah Health Care requires that patients who receive sedation **must** have a responsible adult accompany them home.

Following the Exam

- Your physician will speak to you immediately after your procedure and explain what was found during the exam. You will be given a report with pictures to take home with you. If any biopsies were taken you will receive a letter in approximately 10-14 days business with these results.
- You may continue to have diarrhea or more gas for the remainder of the day and sometimes into the next day.
- Our goal is to make this experience as easy as possible. If you have any suggestions to improve our care please let us know.

Further Questions

- There are several very helpful videos on our website which outline what to expect before, during and after your colonoscopy:
<http://healthcare.utah.edu/gi/preparing.php>
- If you have additional questions or concerns before your procedure, please call our GI Call Center at **801.213.9797**. We have a team of nurses of who will be happy to answer your questions. Our nursing staff is available Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- If you have an **urgent** question or concern after hours, please call the University of Utah Hospital Operator at **801-581-2121** and ask to speak to the GI Fellow on Call.