Preparing for Your Colonoscopy

Two-Day Prep Using PEG Solution Split-Dose & Magnesium Citrate

What is a Colonoscopy?

To help you get ready for your colonoscopy procedure; we have made this handout for you that has information about:

- **Preparing ahead of time** for your colonoscopy, including what you can expect on the day you have it done.
- **Your bowel preparation**, which begins several days before your colonoscopy.
- **Your low-residue diet**, which you will begin three days before your colonoscopy.

**Important:** Please read this entire handout now. It has diet and bowel preparation instructions that you need to follow several days before your colonoscopy procedure.

- If you don’t follow these instructions, your colon may not be cleaned out well enough for your doctor to clearly see the inside of your colon.
- Your doctor needs to get a good look at your colon in order for your colonoscopy to be accurate. For this reason, **your colonoscopy may need to be rescheduled if you do not follow these instructions.**
- Following these instructions so that your colon is clean also makes the procedure go faster and reduces the risks of the procedure.
- If you have any questions, please call us. You can also find more information at [www.uwhealth.org/digestivehealth](http://www.uwhealth.org/digestivehealth)
## What You Do to Prepare for Your Colonoscopy

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<td>Begin your bowel prep.</td>
<td>Drink clear liquids only.</td>
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### 7 Days before Your Colonoscopy

#### Medicines

You may be asked to stop certain medicines before your colonoscopy. Before starting or stopping any medicine, please talk with your doctor who prescribes your medicine.

**Blood thinning** medicines should be stopped:
- No prasugrel (Effient®) for 7 days
- No warfarin (Coumadin®) for 5 days
- No clopidogrel (Plavix®) for 5 days
- No iron for 5 days
- No dabigatran (Pradaxa®) for 2 days
- No rivaroxaban (Xarelto®) for 2 days
- No apixaban (Eliquis®) for 2 days

Do not stop taking your blood thinning medicine without first talking to your doctor who prescribes this medicine. Your doctor will tell you how to safely stop this medicine. Please contact us if you have other questions.
**Diabetes medicines** (oral and insulin) will need to be adjusted for the time when you can’t eat. Please talk with your primary doctor about this.

**3 Days before Your Colonoscopy**

**Diet – Low Residue**

For at least 3 days before your colonoscopy, do not eat the foods listed in the table below. These foods can slow your digestion so that your colon is not clean enough for your colonoscopy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don't eat these foods 3 days before your colonoscopy</th>
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<td>Corn</td>
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<td>Potato Skins</td>
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**Other Preparations**

- **You must have an adult to drive you home or your colonoscopy will be cancelled.** We ask that your driver stay in our building during your procedure. You may take a cab or bus home only if you have a responsible adult to ride with you. The cab or bus driver doesn’t count as your responsible adult; you need a support person to ride with you. You should **not** drive for the rest of the day because of the effects of sedation.

- **You will need to pick up bowel prep supplies at least 2 days before your colonoscopy.** These items can be purchased at any drugstore. If you cannot locate them, please ask a pharmacist.
  1. One 10 ounce bottle of liquid **magnesium citrate** (not red or purple). **Do not** get milk of magnesia.
  2. One PEG solution kit. A prescription for this medicine has been called into your pharmacy.

- Our staff will need to review your health history, prior surgeries, allergies, and medicines taken. Please bring this information with you, including a list of your medicines or your labeled medicine bottles.

- If you use **CPAP or BiPAP** for sleep apnea, please bring it with you. We will need your machine in order to sedate you safely.

- **You should not return to work or make important decisions** (personal or business) until the next day. Plan to go home to rest. You should be able to do your normal daily tasks the day after your colonoscopy.
2 Days before Your Colonoscopy

Follow your bowel prep instructions carefully. A clean colon is needed for your test to be accurate.

**Diet**

1. You may eat and drink as usual until noon. **After 12:00 noon, do not eat or drink solid food, milk or dairy products.**

2. You may drink clear liquids until bedtime. Keep drinking to stay hydrated. Avoid red or purple liquids (i.e. cranberry juice, grape juice, red or purple Jell-O®). These resemble blood in your colon.

| These are clear liquids you may have, if they aren’t red or purple |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Water                  | Soda                   | Clear sports drinks (like Gatorade®) | Tea                        |
| Broth                  | Jello                  | Black Coffee (no cream or milk)       | Apple Juice                |

**Medicines**

If you take medicines, take them 1 hour before drinking the bowel prep or 1 hour after you are done. Do not take them while you are drinking the prep.

**Bowel Prep**

1. **At 3:00 – 5:00 PM** drink the full bottle of magnesium citrate (not red or purple). Keep in mind that the magnesium citrate will give you loose stools and some cramping. The time it takes to start working depends on the person. It could take from 30 minutes to eight hours to work. You may have frequent bowel movements for up to ten hours after drinking it.

2. Continue drinking clear liquids only. No solid food or dairy products. Do not drink anything red or purple.

1 Day before Your Colonoscopy

This part of the bowel prep is done in 2 steps called split-dosing. Research shows that this will result in a much cleaner colon and a more accurate exam. An accurate exam will mean more time between exams!

**Prepare the Bowel Prep**

In the morning, mix the PEG Solution by adding lukewarm water to the fill line. Cap the bottle tightly and shake to dissolve contents.
Helpful Hints

- To lessen the taste of the prep liquid, try drinking it with a straw or add yellow lemonade Crystal Light® to the container or your glass. Do not add any other liquids or flavors.

- To lessen the taste between glasses, try gum or sucking on hard candy or slices of lime or lemon.

- After you mix the prep, we suggest you put it in the refrigerator. Take it out of the refrigerator at least 2 hours before you start drinking it, so you won’t feel too cold.

- For chills, use a blanket warmed in the dryer.

- For a sore bottom, clean with baby wipes and put on a protective ointment (like A+D® or Vaseline®) after bowel movements.

Diet

Continue drinking clear liquids only today. No solid food or dairy products. Do not drink anything red or purple.

Medicines

If you take medicines, take them 1 hour before drinking the bowel prep or 1 hour after you are done. Do not take them while you are drinking the prep.

Bowel Prep

You should plan on each part of your prep taking several hours. Stay near a bathroom.

1. **At 3:00 – 5:00 PM**, start to drink the PEG Solution at a rate of 8 ounces (1 cup) every 10 – 20 minutes. It works best when taken rapidly but you can drink more slowly if you feel too full or nauseated. You should begin to have some abdominal cramping and liquid bowel movements within 1 to 6 hours. You may feel cold while drinking the chilled solution.

2. Stop drinking if you feel sick to your stomach and resume, as soon as you are able, at a slower rate. This part of your bowel prep is complete when you have finished the first half of the gallon. Refrigerate the rest for later.

3. Keep drinking clear liquids tonight to prevent dehydration.

**If you have problems with your bowel prep or you have steady stomach pain, get light-headed and dizzy, or don’t have a bowel movement or have questions about your medicines please call us**

Monday-Friday from 7:30am – 5:00 pm at the numbers listed below. For questions or concerns after our business hours, please call (608)262-2122 and ask for the Gastroenterology (GI) fellow on call.

Digestive Health Center (608)890-5000       (855)342-9900
GI Procedure Center  (608)263-8097       (800)323-8942
The Day of Your Colonoscopy

No Food or Drink

- Don’t eat any food today before your colonoscopy procedure.

- Stop drinking liquids (including water) 4 hours before your arrival time. Don’t drink anything during the 4 hours right before your procedure.

Medicines

Take your normal medicines with a small sip of water up to 1 hour before you arrive. Do not take medicines 1 hour before or after drinking the bowel prep.

Bowel Prep

1. Start to drink the rest of your prep 5 to 6 hours before you arrive. For example: if you were asked to arrive at 7:15 AM, start your prep at 1:15 to 2:15 AM.

2. You must be done drinking 4 hours before you arrive so that sedation can be given safely. Allow time for the prep to work before leaving home.

3. Finish drinking the entire gallon. Your bowel movements should be watery, see-through and free of solids (flecks are OK). The color may appear clear to yellow. Contact us at the numbers listed below with any prep problems.

To Do

- Wear loose, comfortable clothes. You may feel bloated after your procedure, so you may want to wear pants with an elastic or adjustable waistband.

- Leave jewelry and valuables at home.

- Bring your eyeglass case, contact lens container or denture cup, if you have any of these.

- Bring any inhalers, CPAP, or BiPAP that you use. CPAP and BiPAP are needed for sedation to be used safely.

Follow the arrival and registration instructions in your cover letter. If you are delayed, please call us to let us know you are going to be late. If you are over 30 minutes late, we may have to cancel and reschedule. We do our best to stay on time.

Going Home

You will stay in our recovery area after your procedure. A nurse will monitor your recovery and go over your discharge instructions with you.
Plan to be with us for about 2-3 hours. **We ask that your driver be available in our building or by phone during this time.** Your driver needs to be here to take you home at the time your procedure ends. You may not leave the recovery room without a responsible adult.

**After the Colonoscopy and for the Rest of the Day**
- Do not return to work.
- Do not use hazardous machinery.
- Do not make any important decisions.
- Plan to rest.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Do not drive.

Before you leave, please let us know if you have any concerns or questions. We want to be sure to address your concerns and questions before you leave.

**How to Contact Us**

If you are not able to keep your appointment, please let us know **5 days** before

**UW Health Digestive Health Center**
750 University Row  
Madison, WI  
(608) 890-5000  
(855) 342-9900

*Digestive Health Center*, 7am to 5pm weekdays, *(608) 890-5000*. After normal business hours, this number will connect you to the paging operator. Ask for the Gastroenterology (GI) doctor on call. Give your name and phone number with the area code to the operator. The doctor will call you back.

If you live outside of the Madison area, please call **1-855-342-9900**.

**University of Wisconsin Hospitals & Clinics**
**GI Procedure Center**
600 Highland Avenue  
Madison, WI  
(608) 263-8094  
(800) 323-8942

*GI Procedure Center*, 7:30 am to 5pm weekdays, *(608) 263-8094*. After normal business hours, this number will connect you to the paging operation. Ask for Gastroenterology (GI) doctor on call. Give your name and phone number with the area code to the operator. The doctor will call you back.

If you live outside of the Madison area, please call **1-800-323-8942**.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a colonoscopy?
A colonoscopy is an exam of your colon (large bowel). Your doctor uses a long, thin, flexible tube with a built-in camera and light. This tube lets the doctor see the lining of your colon very clearly. If needed, the doctor can remove growths in the colon (called polyps) or take tiny samples of tissue to find certain conditions.

Why do I need a colonoscopy?
The two most common reasons to have a colonoscopy are to better understand symptoms that a person may have and screening for colon cancer. A colonoscopy is one of the best tests for finding problems inside a colon, such as cancer, inflammation, bleeding, or polyps.

What are polyps? What is a polypectomy?
Although most polyps are benign (non-cancerous), a number may have an area of cancer or may develop into cancer later on. Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer related deaths in the United States. We know that 150,000 patients develop colon cancer in this country each year with 50,000 deaths resulting, and yet colon cancer is among the most preventable of all cancers.

Colon cancer almost always begins as a benign colon polyp. In 10 to 15 years, this polyp may slowly change into cancer – this is why most patients are asked to have a colonoscopy at least every 10 years. When regular screening is done, polyps are easily found and removed. Because of screening programs, the number of people who develop colon cancer in the United States is dropping by 2% per year – a major win over cancer!

Please follow all of your instructions and drink all of your prep.
Polyps and abnormal areas can be missed when your colon isn’t clean.

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Is there anything I can do to reduce my risk for colon cancer?
There is strong data that supports the idea that having regular screening tests for colorectal cancer starting at age 50 reduces deaths. Screening tests can find polyps before they become cancer in the colon and rectum. The polyps can be removed at that time, before they grow and develop into colorectal cancer.

Studies have also shown that increased physical activity and keeping a healthy weight can decrease the risk for colorectal cancer. Studies are less clear about other ways to prevent colorectal cancer. Mainly, the best way to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer is by having regular colorectal cancer screening tests starting at age 50.

What can I expect during my procedure?
When you arrive, your nurse will talk with you about your medical history, take your blood pressure, and place an intravenous (IV) line in your arm. The IV allows us to give you medicine as needed during the procedure to help keep you comfortable and relaxed.

Before the exam, your doctor will talk with you about the procedure, explain the risks and benefits, and ask you to sign a consent form. Although complications are rare, there is a small risk of problems such as bleeding, creation of a small tear or hole in the intestine, or inflammation of the vein used for IV medication. Your doctor will explain these and other risks and answer any questions you have.

Once you are in the procedure room, you will receive medicine through the IV, which will make you feel drowsy. Your procedure will then begin. Most patients report very little discomfort during a colonoscopy. If you feel very uncomfortable or anxious, please tell your nurse and doctor. You may need more medicine. Once your colon has been examined, your doctor will remove the instrument and your exam will be over. For most patients, a colonoscopy takes about 30 minutes.

After your procedure you will go to our Recovery Room. Your driver may sit with you there. Once you are awake, you will be given something to drink. Your doctor will discuss results with you before discharge. You and the doctor who referred you will receive a copy of your results.

What if I feel sick or nauseous while I am drinking my prep?
We instruct you to drink 1 glass (about 8 ounces) every 10 – 20 minutes but slow down or stop for 30 minutes if you begin to have nausea or abdominal discomfort. It is okay to take a break if needed; however, it is important to begin drinking your prep again when you feel better. It is important to drink all of your solution to increase the likelihood of having a clean colon.
Won’t I get dehydrated?
  Keep drinking clear liquids until 4 hours before your appointment time. Drinking clear liquids can prevent dehydration.

Can I go to work the day after my colonoscopy?
  Most patients are able to go to work and do their normal activities the day after their colonoscopy. However, some patients may still feel groggy the next day, especially if their exam was later in the day.