

## Preparing for a Colonoscopy

### Tips for drinking the bowel prep

- It helps to use a straw, placed far back in your mouth, to drink the prep.
- Sip on liquids with a strong taste, like a sports drink, after drinking the prep.
- If you feel sick to your stomach, drinking Gingerale may help. Keep drinking the clear fluids but in smaller amounts and more often so you do not get dehydrated.
- You can also take anti nausea medication, such as Gravol, if you are nauseated. It is very important to keep drinking the bowel prep even if you are feeling sick to your stomach.

### During your colonoscopy

The procedure takes about 45 minutes. An intravenous (IV) may be placed to give you medication to make you drowsy and more comfortable. You will be awake, but may not remember much of the experience.

A nurse will be in the room and your blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen will be watched.

When the tube is inserted you may feel as if you need to move your bowels. You may feel some cramping or fullness but there is generally no discomfort.

### After the colonoscopy

You will stay in the recovery area until you are ready to go home. You will be given instructions on how to care for yourself when you get home. Rest for the remainder of the day. You may have minor problems such as bloating or cramping, which should go away within 24 hours.

### Patient education

Patient education videos are available from the Gastrointestinal Society:

<https://badgut.org/information-centre/multimedia/videos/>. For more information about digestive health and tests: <https://gastro.org/practice-guidance/gi-patient-center/>

### Where to go for your procedure

#### Hamilton General Hospital

Check in at Patient Registration on the Main Level **first**. Then go to Endoscopy on the Main level.

#### Juravinski Hospital

Check in at Patient Registration on the Main Level **first**. Then go to Section B, Level 3, Endoscopy

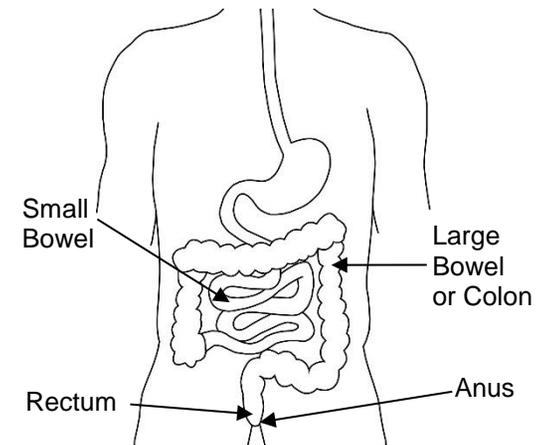
#### McMaster University Medical Centre

Check in at Patient Registration on the main floor **first**. Then take the yellow elevators to 4th floor, 4X.

#### West Lincoln Memorial Hospital

Check in at Patient Registration on the main floor **first**. Then take the elevator to Level 1, Same Day Surgery.

### Sodium Picosulfate Bowel Prep



**Note:** These bookings are in high demand and wait lists are long.

**Please** be respectful of this and give us 72 hours notice if you are not able to keep your time so that we may offer it to someone else.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Arrival Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Doctor:** \_\_\_\_\_

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A colonoscopy is a procedure which involves using a long, flexible tube to look inside the colon. The tube has a tiny video camera and light at the end. The tube moves around the inside of the colon and shows images on a screen.

A colonoscopy is a way to check for colon cancer, and can also be helpful in diagnosing problems such as blood loss, abdominal pain and changes in bowel habits.

You will need to drink a bowel prep to clean out your bowels.

### **Planning for your procedure**

The test usually takes 30 to 45 minutes. You will be here for 1 to 2 hours in total. You will be given sedation for the procedure. A responsible adult must come in to the Endoscopy Unit to take you home after the procedure. You are not allowed to drive, or take a taxi or a bus alone. If you do not have a ride arranged, your appointment will be cancelled or choose to not be sedated.

### **Medications**

Diabetic pills and/or insulin and blood thinners are examples of medications that may need to be adjusted or stopped. Make sure to speak to your doctor or nurse if you take these meds as they will tell you if they need to be stopped or adjusted. Take your usual medications on the day of your test with sips of water, either 2 hours before or 2 hours after drinking the bowel prep to make sure they are absorbed. Bring a current official medication and allergy list from your pharmacy with you.

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### **Jewelry**

All body jewelry must be removed prior to your procedure. If you are wearing jewelry, your procedure will be cancelled. This is not optional.

### **Possible complications**

Colonoscopy is a safe procedure.

Possible complications include:

- Perforation of or injury to the colon wall that may need surgery to fix
- Heart and breathing problems
- Bleeding

These problems are unlikely and their chance of occurring depends on other medical conditions and what is done during the procedure. Colonoscopy is not perfect, and some abnormalities such as polyps or cancer may be missed.

### **Preparation**

It is very important to prepare for the test. The large bowel must be cleaned out to examine the bowel wall and detect any abnormalities. A poor preparation increases the risk of missing significant findings and possibly having to repeat the test.

### **5 days before**

Stop taking Iron tablets and fibre supplements, such as Metamucil.

### **3 days before**

Start a low fibre diet. Low fibre foods include beef, chicken, pork, fish (cooked or steamed), canned fruit, dairy products, eggs, white bread, white pasta, white rice.

Do not eat nuts, popcorn, or foods with seeds. Avoid raw fruits and vegetables, whole wheat and high fibre bread. Do not swallow chewing gum.

Purchase the bowel prep.

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### **1 day before**

Last solid meal is breakfast. Drink only clear fluids\* until your procedure.

At 4:30 Take 2 Dulcolax pills provided with the prep. Drink 1 packet of bowel prep mixed with 150 ml of cold water. Then you must drink an additional 1.5 to 2L of clear fluids over 4 hours.

### **Stay near a bathroom**

The bowel preparation is a very strong laxative and you will have frequent, watery bowel movements. It can start working within 1 to 4 hours.

### **Day of procedure**

4 hours before your appointment, take 2 Dulcolax pills and drink the second packet of bowel prep mixed with 150ml of cold water. Then drink an additional 1.5 to 2L of clear fluids.

\*Examples of clear fluids that are okay include water, clear sports drinks, pulp free fruit juices, clear soup, black coffee or tea. Avoid drinks that are red, blue or purple.

Check your blood sugar if you are diabetic.

**Do not eat or drink for 3 hours before your appointment.** If you have any questions regarding prep or medications, call the Nurse Clinician at 905-521-2100, ext. 76933.