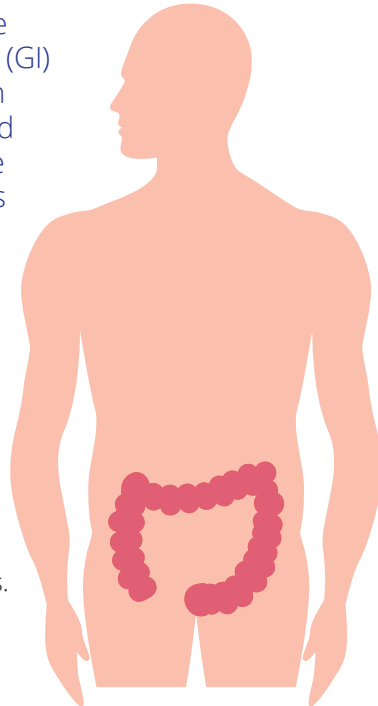




Preparing for a colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is a procedure in which a gastroenterologist (GI) uses a long, flexible tube with a light and camera on the end to view the inside of the large intestine (colon). The scope is inserted into the anus and moves slowly into the colon, allowing the GI to examine, take pictures and remove small samples (biopsies) of intestinal tissue.

To prepare for a colonoscopy, you will be asked to drink a small amount of purgative (a strong bowel-clearing substance) and lots of clear fluids. The purgative will help ensure fecal debris is properly cleared away. This process is commonly referred to as bowel prep.



Bowel prep does take some time, but most of the process happens in the comfort of your home. You won't be able to have any solid food, milk/milk products or juices containing pulp the day before your colonoscopy. You will also be advised to stop any iron preparations one to two weeks before the procedure.

You can expect your first bowel movement about three hours after taking the purgative. Your GI team may recommend the following fluids to drink the day before your procedure:

- water
- clear juices with no pulp (e.g. apple juice)
- pop (e.g. ginger ale)
- soup broth only

You will not be able to drink any fluids containing the colours red, purple or blue.

On your procedure day, when you arrive at the hospital, you will complete a second purgative. You will need to drink lots of fluids and walk around - this will help clear out any remaining fecal debris in the colon. It is important to follow the bowel prep instructions given to you. If you don't, your colonoscopy might take longer due to large amounts of fecal debris covering the walls of the colon. In fact, if your GI can't clearly examine your colon, the whole process may need to be rescheduled and repeated.

Tips for a successful prep:

Read the bowel prep instructions given to you before leaving the clinic. Should you have any questions or need clarification, staff is there to help ensure you have all the information you need.

Gather products that will provide soothing relief, if needed. Medicated wipes, ointments or barrier creams such as Vaseline or Sudocrem can help you keep the anal area clean and avoid any irritation.

Clear your schedule of any school responsibilities or activities such as homework or extracurricular sports - this is the time to take a night off.

Drink lots of clear fluids to make sure you have cleared out your bowels properly and stay hydrated.

Track of your progress, your health-care team will need to know:

- a. how much prep you have taken?
- b. how many bowel movements you have had?
- c. the condition of your stool
- d. how much water you had to drink the morning of your procedure

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