

Diet advice and bowel preparation (bowel prep) for your colonoscopy

The aim of this information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about how to prepare for your colonoscopy investigation.

Please read this leaflet thoroughly at least four days before your appointment. If after reading, you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is a colonoscopy?

This is where a soft, flexible tube with a camera at the end is passed through your back passage (anus) and up inside your bowel by a specially trained doctor or nurse. You should have received the leaflet, **Having a colonoscopy**, which explains the procedure in more detail. If you have not received a copy of this, please ask us for one.

Why do I need to prepare for this procedure?

Your bowel needs to be empty for the colonoscopy, so that the doctor or specialist nurse can see the lining of your bowel. To achieve this you will need to alter your diet and take specific preparations for a few days before the procedure. These changes are explained in this leaflet.

Please make sure you follow these instructions carefully. If you do not, your bowel may not be clear and your examination may have to be repeated. If you have any questions, please call the endoscopy unit on 020 7188 7188 ext 54059 (at St Thomas' Hospital) or 020 7188 1728 (at Guy's Hospital).

Please tell the clinic staff as soon as possible if you:

- are taking any medicines to thin the blood or to prevent blood from clotting (anticoagulants or antiplatelets, such as warfarin, rivaroxaban or clopidogrel)
- have diabetes
- are allergic to latex.

If any of the above applies to you, you may need special instructions.

If your health has deteriorated since seeing the doctor or specialist nurse in clinic please call the endoscopy nurses for advice on **020 7188 7188 ext 54059** (St Thomas' Hospital) or **020 71887188 ext 53499** (Guy's Hospital).

How can I prepare for the procedure?

The remainder of this leaflet advises you on how to prepare in the days leading up to your colonoscopy. Please follow the actions on the days mentioned. Your appointment can be on any working day, but if your appointment is on a Tuesday, “4 days before your colonoscopy” would be the previous Friday.

This is an example:

Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
	4 days before	3 days before	2 days before	1 day before	Day of colonoscopy	

Preparation: Four days before your colonoscopy

- Stop taking any medicines that contain iron*.
- Continue to take all other medicines as usual.

Preparation: Three days before your colonoscopy

- Stop taking any medicines that contain codeine phosphate*.
- Stop taking any medicines that contain loperamide*.
- Continue to take all other medicines as usual.

*A list of what your medicines contain should be featured on the patient information leaflet contained within the box. If you are unsure about whether your medicines contain iron, codeine phosphate or loperamide, please ask your pharmacist.

Preparation: Two days before your colonoscopy

- Drink plenty of fluids, aim for two litres (about eight to ten glasses) per day. This can include clear soups and clear fruit juices. Examples of clear fruit juices include white grape and apple, but not red juices or cordial.
- Do not eat foods containing fibre.

Please see below for a guide on what to eat and what to avoid:

Eat:

- ✓ Well cooked, lean beef, lamb or pork
- ✓ Fish or poultry
- ✓ White rice or white pasta
- ✓ White bread
- ✓ Rich Tea or other plain biscuits
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Butter/margarine/cheese

- ✓ Baked, boiled or mashed potatoes without the skins
- ✓ Soya and tofu

Don't eat:

- ✗ Fruit
- ✗ Pulses or lentils
- ✗ Vegetables
- ✗ Nuts/ seeds
- ✗ Wholemeal bread
- ✗ Brown rice
- ✗ Hi fibre breakfast cereals

Preparation: One day before your colonoscopy

Eating and drinking

- Have a light breakfast, such as boiled egg on toast (white bread), no later than 9am.
- After breakfast do not eat any solid food until after your examination.
- Drink clear fluids only today. This may include water, squash, fizzy drinks, clear strained soup or clear stock. **Aim for two litres (about eight to ten glasses) in total throughout the day.**
- You can drink tea or coffee without milk
- It is best to avoid alcoholic drinks.

Medicines and laxatives

- Stop taking any bulk-forming laxatives now. These include:
 - Isphaghula (e.g. Fybogel®)
 - Methylcellulose (as in Celevac®)
 - Bran
 - Sterculia (as in Normacol®)

Where possible, try to take your usual morning medicines before 10am, and your evening medicines after 9pm. Medicines taken between these times may not be fully absorbed because of the bowel preparation solutions you will be taking (see below). If you need any advice on when to take your medicines, please contact the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline on 020 7188 8748 (open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Bowel preparation solutions

In preparation for your colonoscopy we will provide you with bowel preparation medicines (strong laxative sachets; some patients will be given senna tablets as well). There are various brands of the strong laxative and you may either be given a laxative called sodium picosulphate (Picolax® or CitraFleet®), or a different bowel preparation, such as Klean-Prep® or Moviprep®.

Why might I be given Klean-Prep® or Moviprep®?

If the doctors are concerned about your kidneys or if you have kidney disease they will prescribe you Klean-Prep® or Moviprep®. These preparations are less likely to affect your kidney function than our standard preparation (Picolax® or CitraFleet®). You may be required to have a blood test before and after the procedure to check your kidney function.

Please let us know if:

- you are unable to drink a large volume of fluid
- you are restricted on the volume of fluid you are allowed to drink daily.

How should I take the bowel preparation?

Please follow the instructions and time schedules below and not the instructions on the packet of the strong laxative.

Please note that the instructions are different depending on which strong laxative your doctor has prescribed you – please make sure you read the correct section below. The times that you need to take your medicine will also depend on whether you are having your colonoscopy in the morning or afternoon.

- **If you are taking sodium picosulphate (Picolax[®] or CitraFleet[®]) as your recommended strong laxative**

On the day before the procedure:

4pm	Take four senna tablets from the pack provided with a glass of water.
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5pm	Mix one sachet of sodium picosulphate with approximately 150ml of water. Do this in a large glass or jug, as the mixture may fizz over. Stir the solution for two to three minutes. If the solution becomes warm, allow it to cool before you drink it. You may add more water if you wish to dilute it. Please drink the preparation at once; or if drinking slowly finish within an hour
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On the morning of the procedure

6am for a morning appointment or 10am for an afternoon appointment	Take the second sachet of sodium picosulphate, preparing it in the same way as before.
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- **If you are taking Klean-Prep[®] as your recommended strong laxative**
The solution tastes better if served chilled, so you may wish to mix in advance and keep in the fridge.

On the day before the procedure:

2pm	Empty the contents of one sachet of Klean-Prep [®] into one litre of water and stir until dissolved. Drink this over the course of an hour / an hour and a half.
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4pm	Dissolve the second sachet of Klean-Prep [®] and drink as above
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6pm	Dissolve the third sachet of Klean-Prep [®] and drink as above
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On the morning of the procedure

6am for a morning appointment or 10am for an afternoon appointment	Dissolve the fourth sachet of Klean-Prep [®] and drink as above
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- **If you are taking Moviprep® as your recommended strong laxative**
The solution tastes better if served chilled, so you may wish to mix in advance and keep in the fridge.

On the day before the procedure:	
4pm	Empty the Moviprep® sachet into one litre of water and stir until dissolved. Drink this over the course of an hour / an hour and a half.
On the morning of the procedure	
6am for a morning appointment or 10am for an afternoon appointment	Dissolve the second sachet of Moviprep® and drink as above

Further laxative information

It is advisable that you stay near a toilet once you have started taking the laxatives. You should expect frequent bowel movements and diarrhoea, starting within three hours of the first dose and continuing until after your last dose. The timings of the laxatives are designed so that the effects wear off before you are due to leave home and travel to the hospital. You may have some bloating or stomach cramps – this is normal. You can use a barrier cream, such as zinc and castor oil on your bottom to prevent soreness during your frequent trips to the toilet.

Remember to keep drinking clear fluids to stop you from becoming dehydrated. As a guide, try to drink about one glass every hour. Signs that you are dehydrated include dizziness, headache and confusion.

If you are taking the contraceptive pill it may not be effective once you have taken the bowel preparation, so you must use other precautions (such as condoms) to avoid pregnancy. Please speak to your GP, pharmacist or family planning clinic for further advice on contraception.

If you vomit at any stage after taking the bowel preparation solution, or if you have any concerns regarding this preparation, please telephone the endoscopy unit on 020 7188 3221 (St Thomas' Hospital) or 020 7188 1728 (Guy's Hospital).

Please report any allergic reactions to the preparation such as rash, itchiness, or redness to the endoscopy unit or your GP. In very rare cases you may have a reaction that causes swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat. If this happens seek medical help as soon as possible.

If you would like more information about the strong laxative, please read the leaflet inside the packet. Your senna tablets do not come with a separate leaflet, so more information about senna tablets can be found at the end of this leaflet.

Preparation: On the day of your colonoscopy

- Stop taking any laxatives and continue to avoid any medicines containing iron, loperamide, or codeine.
- Take your other medicines as usual.
- Drink plenty of clear fluid – you can drink up to three hours before your examination.
- Leave valuables at home – do not bring them with you to the clinic.
- You may want to bring a dressing gown, slippers and something to read.

Further information on senna tablets

What are senna tablets?

Senna is a natural effective laxative for the relief of occasional constipation.

Ingredients:

Each senna tablet contains sennosides equivalent to 7.5mg. They may also contain (tri)calcium phosphate, maize starch, lactose, magnesium stearate, povidone 30, talc BP, pre-gelatinised starch, fumed silica, fennel seed, croscarmellose and sucrose.

For safe use:

- Keep out of reach and sight of children.
- Store in the original container.
- Check the foil is not broken before use. If it is, do not take that tablet.
- Do not take if you know you are allergic to any of the ingredients.

Consult your doctor or pharmacist if:

- you have sharp or persistent stomach pain
- your abdomen is tender to the touch or hurts when you move
- you accidentally take too much senna
- you have been told by your doctor that you have an intolerance to some sugars.

Do not store above 25°C. Do not freeze. Do not use after the expiry date.

Possible side effects:

You may experience temporary mild stomach pains. If this gets serious or if you experience other symptoms after taking this product, tell your doctor or pharmacist.

Pre-packed at:

Guy's & St Thomas' Pharmacy
Manufacturing Unit,
Guy's Hospital,
London
SE1 9RT

For further information about senna tablets, please contact the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline (see contact details below)

Manufacturing license number MS: 11387

Date of preparation:

June 2012

Contact us

If you have any questions about preparing your bowel for colonoscopy, please contact one of the pre-assessment nurses on 54052 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

CORE

CORE is a charity offering information on digestive disorders.

t: 020 7486 0341 **e:** info@corecharity.org.uk **w:** www.digestivedisorders.org.uk

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS.

Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

Leaflet number: 3993/VER1

Date published: November 2014

Review date: November 2017

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