

Diet advice and bowel preparation 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** due to medications that need to be stopped. 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 tell the nursing staff as soon as possible on the number at the end of the leaflet 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). You do not need to call if you only take aspirin
- have diabetes and are on insulin
- have any allergies to any medicines.
- you are allergic to latex

Please let us know if you are taking any regular medicines at your pre-assessment appointment (including anything you buy yourself over the counter or any herbal or homeopathic medicines).

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 ask for extension 54059** (St Thomas' Hospital) or **020 71887188 extension 53499** (Guy's Hospital).

We have a health questionnaire that we ask you to complete which will help to speed up your appointments and pre-assessment. This can be filled in on the day of your appointment. There is an electronic copy which can be emailed in advance on our Endoscopy web page via the trust website www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/our-services/gastroenterology-and-hepatology/overview.aspx

How can I prepare for a colonoscopy?

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.

Date					
	4 days before	3 days before	2 days before	1 day before	Day of colonoscopy

Preparation: Four days before your colonoscopy

- Eat and drink as normal.
- Stop taking any medicines that contain iron* as the active ingredient (these will have iron, ferrous, ferric or ferredetate in the name of the medicine).
- Continue to take all other medicines as usual.

Preparation: Three days before your colonoscopy

- Eat and drink as normal.
- Stop taking any medicines, including over the counter medicine 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, doctor or nurse caring for you. Or call the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline on 020 7188 8748 (open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Preparation: Two days before your colonoscopy

- Drink plenty of fluids, aim for two litres (about eight to ten glasses) per day. Please see guide on the next page.
- Start restricted eating having small meals from the guide as this will help the bowel preparation medicine work properly.
- Do not eat foods containing fibre.

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

You can eat/drink:

- ✓ Well cooked, lean beef, lamb, ham, veal or pork
- ✓ Fish, shellfish or poultry
- ✓ White rice, noodles or white pasta
- ✓ Cereal including cornflakes and crisped rice cereal, **Not Bran**
- ✓ White bread or toast
- ✓ Rich Tea or other plain biscuits
- ✓ Eggs, especially boiled or poached
- ✓ Butter/margarine/cheese
- ✓ Milk, cream, cottage cheese
- ✓ Potatoes without the skins; boiled, creamed, mashed or baked
- ✓ Soya and tofu
- ✓ Gravy made from stock cubes (plain or cornflour can be used to thicken)
- ✓ Sugar or sweetener
- ✓ Clear jelly
- ✓ Water, cordial, fizzy drinks, clear strained soup or clear stock

Don't eat/drink:

- ✗ Fruit, including fresh, dried and canned
- ✗ Brown rice , brown pasta
- ✗ Hi-fibre breakfast cereals (including porridge oats)
- ✗ Pulses or lentils
- ✗ Hi-fibre, multi-seeded, 50/50 or wholemeal bread
- ✗ Vegetables
- ✗ Nuts/seeds
- ✗ Roasted, deep fried (chips)
- ✗ Jam
- ✗ Crisps
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Red jelly
- ✗ Red cordial, or fruit juice

Preparation: The day before your colonoscopy

Eating and drinking

- Take your regular morning medicines unless you have been instructed otherwise.
- 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 not including the bowel preparation.**
- You can drink tea or coffee with small splash of milk.
- It is best to avoid alcoholic drinks.

Medicines and laxatives

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

Preparation: On the day of your colonoscopy

- Stop taking any laxatives and continue to avoid any medicines containing iron, loperamide, or codeine.
- You should continue to take all of your medications as normal, unless you have been told otherwise by the doctor or endoscopy nurse.
- 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 Endoscopy Department.
- You may want to bring a dressing gown, slippers and something to read.

Bowel preparation solutions

In preparation for your colonoscopy we will provide you with bowel preparation solutions (strong laxative sachets; some patients will be given senna tablets as well).

There are various brands of the bowel preparation solutions: We will tick the box against the preparation that you have been prescribed

Our standard preparation called CitraFleet® or Picolax® (sodium picosulphate),

Klean-Prep®

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.
- You have been told by a doctor that your kidneys are not working properly.

How should I take the bowel preparation?

Please follow the instructions and time schedules in this leaflet and **not** the instructions on the packet.

Please note that the instructions are different depending on which bowel preparation your doctor has prescribed you – please make sure you read the correct section in this leaflet. 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 prescribed Sodium Picosulphate (Picolax® or CitraFleet®) sachets and senna tablets



The solution tastes better if served chilled, so you may wish to mix in advance and keep in the fridge. Use within 24 hours of preparation.

On the day before the procedure:	
4pm	Take four senna tablets from the pack provided with a glass of water.
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.
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.

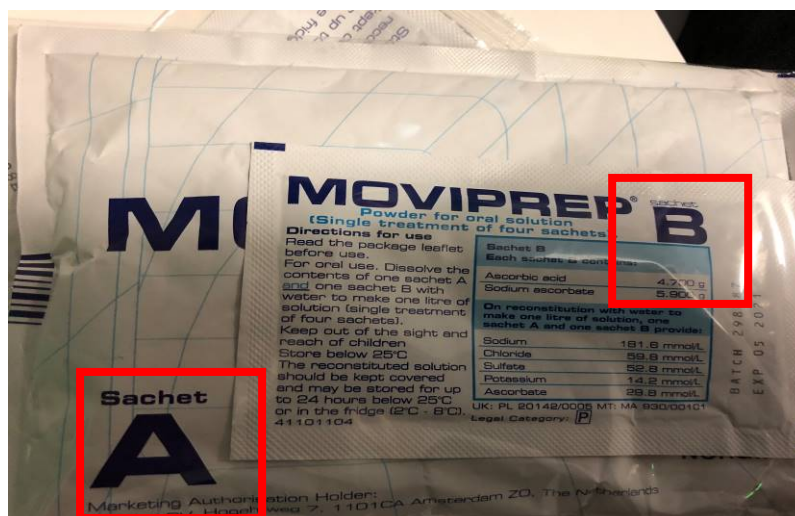
If you are prescribed Klean-Prep®



The solution tastes better if served chilled, so you may wish to mix in advance and keep in the fridge. Use within 24 hours of preparation.

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.
4pm	Dissolve the second sachet of Klean-Prep® and drink as above.
6pm	Dissolve the third sachet of Klean-Prep® and drink as above.
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.

If you are prescribed Moviprep®



The solution tastes better if served chilled, so you may wish to mix in advance and keep in the fridge. Use within 24 hours of preparation.

On the day before the procedure:

4pm

Empty one sachet A and one sachet B of Moviprep® 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 A & B Moviprep® as above and drink over an hour/ an hour and a half.

Will I have to stay near a toilet once I have started taking the bowel preparation?

It is advisable that you stay near a toilet once you have started taking the bowel preparation solution. You should expect frequent bowel movements and diarrhoea, starting within three hours of the first dose and continuing until after your last dose. **Please note: The timings of the bowel preparation medication are designed so that the effects wear off before you are due to leave home and travel to the hospital.**

Will I have any side effects?

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.

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 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).

Other information

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.

Further information on senna tablets

What are senna tablets?

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

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.

The leaflet inside the box gives some more information about senna tablets

Other questions

Please see our Gastroenterology and Hepatology web page regarding other Endoscopy frequently asked questions and answers. www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/our-services/gastroenterology-and-hepatology/overview.aspx

Please make sure you follow the instructions in this leaflet 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 Nurse and ask for extension 54059 (at St Thomas' Hospital) or 020 7188 1728 (at Guy's Hospital).

Contact us

If you need to **change or cancel your appointment** please ring **020 7188 8887**.

If you have any questions about preparing your bowel for colonoscopy, please contact one of the pre-assessment nurses on 020 7188 7188 ask for extension **54052** (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

If you have any other questions, problems or concerns about the colonoscopy procedure please contact the **endoscopy unit** staff for advice (**Monday-Saturday 9am-5pm**):

t: 020 7188 7188 ask for extension 54059 for **Nurse in charge**

t: 020 7188 7188 ask for extension: 54046 St Thomas **Reception desk**

t: 020 7188 1728 **Guy's Hospital**

In case of emergency: Out of hours (6pm until 8am the next day and on Saturdays and Sundays: **t:** 020 7188 7188 and ask to be put through to the On-call gastroenterology registrar (via Rota watch).

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

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our Medicines Helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health. **w:** www.nhs.uk

Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets, or **e:** patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 3993/VER2

Date published: February 2019

Review date: February 2022

© 2019 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

A list of sources is available on request