

Colonoscopy



Colonoscopy is a procedure used to examine or inspect the bowel and may also include a variety of minor operations such as taking small tissue samples (biopsy) and removal of polyps. An alternative method of examining the large bowel is by a barium enema x-ray. Colonoscopy has the advantage over a barium enema x-ray of allowing tissue samples or biopsies to be taken.

How are you prepared?

Prior to the colonoscopy you will be provided with a preparation kit containing full instructions. See the preparation sheet regarding Picolax or Colonlytely and follow the instructions: If you have diabetes, please contact your doctor and discuss your medication prior to starting the preparation. If you have asthma, bring your inhalers in case you need to use them. Please bring all your medications with you.

You will be given a sedative through a vein in the arm before the procedure to make you more comfortable **and for this reason you should not drive** after the procedure.

Special considerations

You should advise the nursing staff if you are sensitive (allergic) to any drug or other substance.

You should **cease iron** tablets and drugs for diarrhoea at least three days before the procedure. It is also desirable to avoid taking aspirin or NSAIDs (arthritis tablets). If you are on these medications, you should discuss the matter with your Doctor. You should also inform your Doctor if you are taking blood thinning tablets or if you have heart problems such as heart valve disease or a pacemaker.

What do we do?

The colonoscope is a long and highly flexible tube about the thickness of your index finger. It is inserted through the rectum into the large intestine—to allow inspection of the whole large bowel.

A cancer of the large bowel arises from pre-existing polyps (a benign wart-like growth), it is usual practice to remove any polyps, which are found during the procedure. Most polyps can be removed by placing a wire snare around the base and applying an electric current.

Safety and risks

For inspection of the bowel alone, complications of colonoscopy are extremely rare. If you have polyps removed there is a very small risk of bleeding from the bowel and perforation (creating a hole) in the bowel. Occasionally, these complications may require treatment by blood transfusion or by surgery. If you wish to have full details of **all possible complications** discussed, please contact your doctor.

Afterwards

The sedative and painkiller you are given before the procedure is very effective in reducing discomfort. However, it may affect your memory for some time afterwards. Even when the sedative appears to have worn off, you may find you are unable to recall details of your discussion with the Doctor. For this reason, you must have a relative or friend collect you from the unit and they must remain with you until the next day. You should not travel alone on public transport after the procedure.

You must not operate machinery (including driving a car), sign any legally binding documents or carry out any demanding tasks for the remainder of the day.

Some patients, especially those with irritable bowel or diverticular disease, notice some discomfort for a few days afterwards, which should settle on simple measures such as Panadol and adequate fibre in the diet.

If you have any severe abdominal, bleeding from the back passage, fever, or other symptoms that cause you concern, you should contact your Doctor immediately or go to an Emergency Department.

Afternoon procedure:
bowel preparation

Colonoscopy



Please go to your local chemist and purchase the bowel preparation:

Two sachets of Picolax or PicoPrep and

One sachet of Colonlytely (70g) or Glycoprep-C (70g).

Diet

Two days before the colonoscopy

Please avoid eating any grains, nuts or seeds.

One day before the colonoscopy

You can only have clear fluids:

- ~ Black tea or coffee;
- ~ Jelly (but not red or purple jelly);
- ~ Soup broth (no solid food in it);
- ~ Juice or soft drinks;
- ~ Cordial or water.

The day of the colonoscopy

You can drink clear fluids up until **five hours** before the procedure but then you must **fast**.

Whilst fasting, take all your regular medications with a sip of water **up to three hours** before the procedure.

Medications

- ~ Regular medications can be taken during the colonoscopy preparation period;
- ~ **Do not** stop your heart or blood pressure medications;
- ~ If you are diabetic you will be given specific instructions:

- ~ If you are take blood thinners you will be given specific instructions:

- ~ **Cease iron** tablets seven days before the colonoscopy.

Bowel preparation instructions

One day before the colonoscopy

At 12pm

Add contents of one Picolax/PicoPrep sachet to 250ml of water in a large glass. This mixture may be effervescent so leave room in the glass for expansion. Drink mixture. In the hour after drinking the mixture, drink at least 500ml of plain water. You are allowed to flavour the mixture with cordial.

At 2pm

Repeat the process with the second sachet of Picolax/PicoPrep. Ensure you drink at least 500ml of water after drinking the mixture.

The day of the colonoscopy

At 7am

On the morning of the test, mix the sachet of Colonlytely/Glycoprep-C with one litre of cold water. Drink this slowly over one hour.

Drink clear fluids

Continue to drink plenty of clear fluids to prevent dehydration.

Fast

Stop drinking for **five hours** before the colonoscopy.

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