

Preparing for your colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is an examination of the colon using a thin, flexible tube with a tiny camera on the end. The instructions below will help you get ready for your colonoscopy. Getting ready for your colonoscopy is called “bowel preparation.”



You must follow your bowel preparation instructions carefully. Poor bowel preparation will mean your colonoscopy won't happen.

You need to be on a clear liquid diet.

The day before your colonoscopy, you need to stop eating solid food. You can have clear liquids (liquids you can see through), popsicles and Jell-O.

Drink lots of liquids (like water, Gatorade and juice) before your colonoscopy.

During your bowel preparation, make sure you drink at least 4 litres of liquid a day, or about 1 cup every hour.

Examples of things you **can** have:

- Water
- Clear broth or bouillon
- Clear juice without pulp (e.g., apple juice)
- Sports drinks (e.g., Gatorade)
- Lemon or lime Jell-O
- Lemon or lime popsicles

Examples of things you **can't** have:

- **Do not** have any red liquids, red Jell-O or red popsicles. The red dye can make it harder for your doctor to do your colonoscopy.
- Talk to your doctor to see if there are other foods you should avoid.

You need to take medication to clean out your colon.

You will be taking medications called **sodium picosulphate, citric acid and magnesium oxide (PSMC)** and **bisacodyl**. There are other names for these medications, so your doctor may call them something different.

These medications will make you go to the washroom a lot. Sometimes you will have to go to the washroom very suddenly, so make sure you stay close to a washroom. It can sometimes take a few hours to feel an effect. By the end of your bowel preparation, your stool (poop) should be a yellow or clear liquid.

Someone must drive you home after your colonoscopy.

If you do not have someone to drive you home, you may have your colonoscopy rescheduled.

Split-dose PSMC +
bisacodyl (saline laxatives)
(hyperosmolar)

You might have to stop taking other medications.

Talk to your doctor about the medications you are on to see if you need to stop taking them.

STOP taking (completed by healthcare provider):

_____	on	_____
medication		date
_____	on	_____
medication		date
_____	on	_____
medication		date



Contact the doctor doing your colonoscopy if you have any questions about your bowel preparation.

Follow your bowel preparation carefully.

Most people will take their bowel preparation medication over 2 days, but this is not always the case. The timing of your bowel preparation medication will depend on when you are having your colonoscopy. Make sure you follow your instructions about when to take your medication.

Instructions (completed by your healthcare provider):



Your colonoscopy has been booked for: _____ at _____
date time

1. Start your clear liquid diet the day before your colonoscopy, after you eat breakfast.

2. Take your first dose of PSMC on _____ at _____
date time

Dissolve 1 PSMC package in about 1 cup of water and drink the whole solution at once.

3. Take your second dose of PSMC on _____ at _____
date time

Dissolve 1 PSMC package in about 1 cup of water and drink the whole solution at once.

4. Are you being sedated (given medication to make you feel more comfortable)? Yes No

If yes, stop having **all** water, clear liquid or food 2 hours before your colonoscopy, starting at _____
time

Disclaimer: The information provided on this printed "Preparing for your colonoscopy" form (the "Document") is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute, or be a substitute for, medical advice. Any person consulting this Document is expected to use independent qualified clinical judgment and skills, or seek out the advice of a qualified health professional before applying any information contained herein, as applicable. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something that you have read in this Document. This Document is provided "as-is". CCO and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario do not make any representation or warranty as to the accuracy, reliability, completeness or fitness for a particular purpose of the information on this Document, and disclaim all liability for the use of this Document, and for any claims, actions, demands or suits that arise from such use.

Need this information in an accessible format?

1-855-460-2647, TTY 416-217-1815, publicaffairs@cancercare.on.ca

PCC4059