

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR COLONOSCOPY**

You have been scheduled for a **colonoscopy**. This procedure allows us to look at the inside of your colon (large intestine) with a flexible tube created with a specialized lens and video chip system at its tip. As the instrument is passed through the bowel, a vivid image is displayed on a TV monitor within the examination room.

Colonoscopy is most commonly recommended for:

1. Identifying and removing colon polyps.
2. Identifying a cause for rectal or “internal” bleeding.
3. Explaining abnormal or changing bowel habits.
4. Further defining abnormal findings on barium lower GI series, CT scan, etc.
5. Evaluating other problems as deemed necessary by your physician such as anemia or weight loss.

This exam is most commonly utilized to identify and remove polyps. Polyps are usually benign or non-cancerous growths in the bowel. If identified and removed at an early stage, they pose little health hazard. If allowed to grow however, some may transform into malignant or cancerous polyps. Therefore, it is best to remove them early when possible. Polyp removal, or **polypectomy** involves slipping a wire loop through the colonoscope and around the polyp tissue, tightening the wire, then heating the wire so that the growth is both cut off and cauterized simultaneously. This is usually a simple procedure and virtually always painless. In addition to polyp removal, **biopsies** (or tissue samples) can be obtained by painlessly pinching off a piece of tissue for microscopic review.

This procedure may sound uncomfortable but this is not the case. Before the procedure is begun, an IV is inserted into your vein. Sedatives and pain relievers are administered into your IV both before and during the examination. These medications are so effective that patients sleep through the exam and awaken within 5-10 minutes after we are finished. Additionally, there is no “hangover” effect since the drugs clear from your body very quickly.

Colonoscopy is quite safe and complications occur very infrequently. It is estimated that 1 patient in 3500 (0.35%) will have a serious side effect from this exam. Potential problems include an adverse reaction to the intravenous medications, bleeding from a polyp removal site, or the inadvertent puncture or perforation of the bowel wall. Serious problems such as bleeding or tears may require surgery. Remember however, that these complications are rarely encountered. In contrast, the risk of developing colon cancer is nearly 1 in 15 (approximately 6%) for individuals who never enter a screening program. Colonoscopy currently provides the best view of the bowel lining, but no test is perfect, and even with an experienced physician, some colon abnormalities could be missed.

### **THINGS TO REMEMBER**

**BOWEL PREPARATION:** In order to effectively visualize the bowel and to identify and treat any abnormalities, you will need to be thoroughly cleaned out. This may be the toughest, but most important element of a successful examination. Cleansing options are described below and should be followed to the best of your ability.

**ARRIVAL TIME AND DURATION:** You can expect to be at the facility approximately 3 hours from the time you arrive until the time you are released to go home.

**TRANSPORTATION:** You will not be allowed to drive yourself home. Please make arrangements for a friend or family member to take you home.

**SPECIAL MEDICATION INSTRUCTIONS:** In general, you will be able to continue your normal medications. There are a few major exceptions, however. **Coumadin (warfarin), other blood thinners, aspirin, and arthritis anti-inflammatory pain relievers may increase the risk of bleeding from polyp removal.** We will therefore ask you to miss two day’s doses of each and any of these medications so that the day of the colonoscopy will be your third day without such blood thinners. **In addition, insulin and oral diabetic agents should not be taken on the afternoon or evening on the day prior to your procedure, as well as the day of your procedure, until the exam is complete.**

## **BOWEL PREPARATION PRIOR TO COLONOSCOPY**

Cleansing of the bowel is the most challenging, yet one of the most important aspects of colonoscopy. We are aware of the burden that preparation places upon you and only ask that you try your best to follow the instructions. If there are discrepancies between instructions on this form and those on the product you purchase, follow the instructions written here.

There are two choices available for bowel cleansing. Neither involves enemas. We have learned that the most effective approach to bowel cleansing is “split-dosing,” Specifically, part of the preparation is taken the evening prior to your colonoscopy and the remainder on the day of your exam. Both laxative regimens require prescriptions, which we will provide.

**BOWEL PREP #1** is called *Osmoprep*. The encouraging aspect of this approach is the use of pills, rather than liquid laxatives. The downside is that there are many pills to take (20 on the night before over several hours and 12 on the day of the procedure). You will still need to drink additional liquids to stay hydrated, but they will largely be fluids of your choice.

You should be aware that there have been very rare reports of potentially serious kidney damage with *OsmoPrep*. Additional information is available on our website ([www.gutcheck.org](http://www.gutcheck.org)) or by calling our office.

**BOWEL PREP #2** is called *MoviPrep*. This involves drinking approximately 2 quarts of a laxative solution, split between the night before, and the morning of, your colonoscopy. Once again, as with *Osmoprep*, you will still need to drink additional liquids to stay hydrated, but they will largely be fluids of your choice.

You will be asked to choose one of these preparations and follow the instructions outlined below. Hydration is extremely important. Therefore, please consume as much liquid as possible prior to and during the process of bowel cleansing.

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### **BOWEL PREP #1 OSMOPREP**

As mentioned previously, this preparation involves pills rather than liquid laxatives to flush out your bowels. The pills are somewhat large but can be easily broken in half if necessary. You will still need to drink a fair amount of liquids for this bowel prep, but your choices are quite wide and can be largely suited to your tastes.

Your exam could be scheduled for the morning or the afternoon. The choice is yours. Your decision may depend upon whether you are an early morning riser or willing to become one for this day only. Should you change your mind about your appointment time after reading these instructions, you are free to reschedule at any time. In most instances however, we would have to change the date of your colonoscopy as well.

You'll notice that the prep schedule requests that you take the pills 15 minutes apart. Sometimes this is hard to do and you might feel a bit full. If so, please don't be concerned—simply take a bit longer between doses to let your stomach empty. We'd rather you get the prep done more slowly than experience nausea or vomiting and risk having to start over.

Several days prior to your colonoscopy:

1. If not yet done so, please have your prescription for *Osmoprep* tablets filled at your pharmacy.

The day prior to your colonoscopy:

1. You may eat a regular breakfast.
2. You may eat lunch, but please complete this meal by 3:00pm. Please do not eat fruits or vegetables with this meal.
3. If you'd like, you may have a liquid dinner, but if you read on, you'll see that there will be plenty of liquids for you to drink that evening.
4. Beginning at 6-7:00 pm, you should take four *Osmoprep* tablets every 15-20 minutes, **for a total of twenty (20) pills**.
5. Each dose should be followed by a large glass of fluid (approximately 8 ounces). You can use any kind of clear or nearly clear fluid you wish. Suggestions include water, apple juice, ginger ale, lemonade, tea or Gatorade (there are several colorless or transparent flavors—please, no red or orange colored drinks).
6. Of course, don't stray from home. You're to expect diarrhea and rarely, mild cramping.

On the day of your colonoscopy:

1. Sorry, no solid food for breakfast. You may have coffee or tea prior to beginning your morning bowel prep.
2. Approximately 3-4 hours before you're scheduled to leave home, you should take four *Osmoprep* tablets every 15-20 minutes with a large glass of the approved liquids, **for a total of twelve (12) pills**. If you'd like, you could use coffee or tea as one of these liquids.
3. You may take any of your daily medications 1-2 hours after your last dose of *Osmoprep* except do not take aspirin, blood thinners, anti-inflammatory arthritis pain relievers, or diabetic medications.
4. Do not worry about still having diarrhea on the way to the hospital. This virtually never occurs.

**Hydration is extremely important. Therefore, please consume as much liquid as possible prior to, during, and after the process of bowel cleansing.**

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## **BOWEL PREP #2 MOVIPREP**

Your exam could be scheduled for the morning or the afternoon. The choice is yours. Your decision may depend upon whether you are an early morning riser or willing to become one for this day only. Should you change your mind about your appointment time after reading these instructions, you are free to reschedule at any time. In most instances however, we would have to change the date of your colonoscopy as well.

Several days prior to your colonoscopy:

1. If not yet done so, take the attached prescription for *MoviPrep* to your pharmacy. The *MoviPrep* carton contains 4 pouches and a disposable container.

One day prior to your colonoscopy:

1. Empty one Pouch A, one Pouch B and lukewarm water to the top line on the container. Mix or shake to dissolve. Refrigeration is optional, but most often preferred. Eat breakfast and lunch as you normally would. Please avoid fruits and vegetables.
2. Eat a light dinner, if desired. Avoid fresh fruits and vegetables. Many patients skip dinner (that is your option) since the laxative tends to be quite filling.
3. At approximately 6:00 pm, begin to drink the laxative preparation. The *MoviPrep* container is divided by 4 marks. Every 15-20 minutes, drink the solution down to the next mark until completed.
4. Thereafter, drink 16 ounces (2 full glasses) of fluids. Suggestions include water, apple juice, ginger ale, lemonade, tea or Gatorade (there are several colorless or transparent flavors—please, no red or orange colored drinks). If you develop bloating or nausea, feel free to take a short break. Within 15-30 minutes, this discomfort should resolve itself. It is better to take a slightly longer period to consume the laxative than to push yourself to nausea and perhaps, vomiting.
5. You can expect some mild urgency, followed by several bouts of diarrhea. This, of course, is the desired goal.

On the morning of your colonoscopy:

1. Sorry, no solid food for breakfast. You may have coffee or tea prior to or during your morning bowel prep.
2. Empty one Pouch A, one Pouch B and lukewarm water to the top line on the container. Mix or shake to dissolve. Refrigeration is optional, but most often preferred. If this is your desire, mix your prep prior to going to bed after you've completed last evening's adventure.
3. Approximately 3-4 hours before you're scheduled to leave home, repeat the instructions as outlined in #3 and #4 above.

**Hydration is extremely important. Therefore, please consume as much liquid as possible prior to, during, and after the process of bowel cleansing.**