

Bowel Preparation Instructions

Why Proper Bowel Preparation Matters:

Proper bowel preparation is one of the most important steps for a successful colonoscopy. A clean colon allows me to get a clear, unobstructed view, helping detect any issues like inflammation or small growths called polyps. Polyps are tiny lumps that can grow on the lining of your bowel. Most are harmless, but some can turn into cancer if not removed early.

Why Is Bowel Preparation So Important?

Think of it like driving a car on a sunny, clear day versus driving in thick fog.

✔ When your bowel is properly cleaned, I can see everything clearly, just like driving in perfect weather.

✘ If the bowel is not well prepared, it's like driving in foggy conditions—polyps and other issues may be missed, leading to an inconclusive test or the need for a repeat procedure.

Colonoscopy Preparation Diet Instructions:

Proper dietary preparation is essential for a successful colonoscopy. Some foods are hard to digest and can remain in the colon, making it difficult for the doctor to see clearly. These foods can clog the endoscope's suction channel, which is very small and designed to remove fluid, debris, and dirty water puddles during the procedure. If the channel gets blocked, it becomes harder to clear the view and safely examine your bowel.

Following these guidelines will help ensure a clear bowel, allowing for an accurate and effective procedure.

Foods to AVOID (Start 5 Days Before):

Nuts, seeds, and grains — can block the camera's suction.

Leafy greens and fibrous vegetables — hard to digest.

Fruits with seeds or skin — e.g., berries, grapes, tomatoes, cucumbers.

Red or purple-colored foods and drinks — can stain the colon.

Whole grains and high-fiber cereals — take longer to digest.

Recommended Diet (3–5 Days Before):

White bread, white rice, or pasta (avoid whole grains).

Lean proteins — chicken, fish, eggs (avoid fatty meats).

Dairy products — milk, yogurt, cheese (if tolerated).

Well-cooked, skinless vegetables (no leafy greens).

Peeled fruits — apples, bananas, melons (avoid skins/seeds).

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The Day Before the Colonoscopy (Clear Liquid Diet Only):

Water — stay well-hydrated.

Clear broths (chicken, beef, or vegetable) — no solids.

Plain tea or coffee (no milk or creamer).

Apple juice, white grape juice, sports drinks (no red/purple).

Clear gelatin (no red or purple colors).

Ice pops (no fruit bits or red/purple dyes).

X No solid food, dairy, alcohol, or cloudy liquids.

The Day of the Colonoscopy:

Stop all liquids at least 2 to 4 hours before your procedure.

Take the prescribed bowel prep as instructed to fully cleanse your colon.

Following these dietary instructions will help ensure a clear colon and a successful procedure.

Understanding Bowel Preparation Solutions:

Before your colonoscopy, you'll need to take a bowel preparation (bowel prep) to clean out your bowels. This helps your doctor see clearly and perform a safe and accurate test.

There are two main types of bowel prep solutions:

Which One Will You Take?

In our clinic, we commonly use:

- PicoPrep - for people who are otherwise healthy
- ColonLYTELY - for people with kidney disease, heart failure, or at risk of dehydration

There are also other bowel prep brands available in Australia.

Please speak to your pharmacist or doctor before using any other type of bowel prep - especially if you have other health conditions.

For Morning Appointments (7:30 AM - 11:30 AM):

Evening Before:

- 6:00 PM - Drink 2 litres of bowel preparation over 2 hours
- Drink extra clear fluids afterward (at least 1-2 glasses)

Early Morning:

- 4:00–5:00 AM - Drink 1 litre of bowel prep

Finish at least 2 hours before your arrival time

You may sip clear fluids until your fasting cut-off time

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For Afternoon Appointments (12:00 PM - 4:00 PM):

Evening Before:

- 6:00–7:00 PM - Drink 1 litre of bowel prep

Drink extra clear fluids afterward

Morning of Procedure:

- 7:00–8:00 AM - Drink 2 litres of bowel prep

Finish drinking at least 2 hours before your appointment

- Continue clear fluids until the fasting cut-off

Bowel Prep Timing Chart:

Use this table to understand when to take your bowel preparation based on your appointment time:

Appointment Time	Evening Before	Morning of Procedure
Morning (7:30–11:30 AM)	6:00 PM – 2L prep + clear fluids	4:00–5:00 AM – 1L prep, finish \geq 2 hrs.' before arrival
Afternoon (12:00–4:00 PM)	6:00–7:00 PM – 1L prep + clear fluids	7:00–8:00 AM – 2L prep, finish \geq 2 hrs before procedure

Clear Fluids You Can Drink:

- Water
- Clear apple juice
- Clear broth (no solids)
- Lemonade or sports drinks (not red or purple)
- Tea or black coffee (no milk)

Tips to Make It Easier to Drink

- Chill it – Keep the prep in the fridge before drinking.
- Use a straw – Sip from the back of the mouth.
- Lemon slices, mint tea rinse (if approved).
- Take small sips often, break into portions.
- Stay near a toilet.
- Avoid red or purple drinks.

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Final Reminders:


- Finish all of the prep unless told otherwise
- Don't mix with sugary drinks, milk, or fizzy drinks
- Follow your timing and fasting instructions
- Contact your doctor if you vomit, feel very unwell, or can't complete the prep

How Do I Know If My Bowel Is Clean Enough?

When you are passing clear fluid that looks like what you're drinking — either colorless or with a slight yellow tint

 Not Ready Yet: Brown stool, thick or solid pieces

 Almost There: Cloudy brown/yellow liquid with bits


 You're Ready! Clear, pale-yellow liquid — like urine or lemonade. No solid bits or dark pieces

What to Do If You Feel Nausea or Vomit During Bowel Prep:

It's not uncommon to feel a bit nauseated while drinking bowel prep, especially if it's consumed too quickly or the taste is unpleasant.

 If You Feel Nauseous:

- Pause for 15–30 minutes. Let your stomach settle.
- Take small sips instead of big gulps.
- Try chilling the prep more or drinking through a straw.
- Rinse your mouth with cold water, peppermint tea, or suck on ice chips.
- Try walking around gently — this can help ease bloating and nausea.

 If You Vomit:

- Wait at least 30–60 minutes before trying again.
- Resume at a slower pace — small sips every few minutes.
- Drink clear fluids (like water or clear lemonade) during the break to stay hydrated.
- If vomiting continues or you can't keep the prep down:
- Call your clinic as your bowel may not be clean enough for the procedure.
- You may need an alternative plan.

Call the Clinic If:

- You're still passing solid stool the morning of your test
- You feel unwell or can't finish the prep
- You're unsure whether you're ready

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Medication instruction: Stop Before the Procedure (Unless Instructed Otherwise):

Iron tablets – Stop 5–7 days before (they darken the colon).

Fiber supplements – Stop 3–5 days before (e.g. Metamucil, psyllium).

Herbal or natural supplements – Stop 5 days before (may affect bleeding/prep).

Constipating medications – Stop 3–5 days before, unless advised otherwise:

- Codeine or other opioid painkillers
- Loperamide (Imodium) or other anti-diarrhoea
- Some antacids with aluminium or calcium
- Bowel-slowing meds — ask your doctor if unsure


These medications can make bowel prep less effective.

Blood Thinners:

Do NOT stop unless specifically advised by your doctor.

This includes:

- Warfarin
- Clopidogrel (Plavix)
- Ticagrelor
- Apixaban (Eliquis)
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto)
- Aspirin

 *For most diagnostic procedures and small polyp removals, blood thinners are usually continued, as the bleeding risk is lower than the risk of stroke or heart problems.*

Blood Pressure Medications:

On the morning of your colonoscopy:

Take as usual (with a small sip of water):

- Beta-blockers — e.g. metoprolol, atenolol, bisoprolol
- Calcium channel blockers — e.g. amlodipine, diltiazem

Do NOT take:

- ACE inhibitors — e.g. lisinopril, ramipril
- ARBs — e.g. losartan, valsartan
- Diuretics (“water tablets”) — e.g. hydrochlorothiazide, furosemide

These may lower your blood pressure too much under sedation. You can restart them after the procedure.

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Insulin Adjustments for Colonoscopy:



The Day Before (Clear Liquid Diet)

Short-acting insulin (e.g. Novorapid, Humalog):

- Skip lunch and dinner doses if not eating solid food.
- Monitor your blood sugar.
- Drink sweetened clear liquids if sugar drops.

Long-acting insulin (e.g. Lantus, Levemir, Toujeo, Tresiba):

- Take **75% of your usual evening dose.**
- Example: Usually, 20 units → Take 15 units



The Morning of the Procedure

- **Fasting — no food or liquids**
- **✗ Skip short-acting insulin**
- **✓ Take 50–75% of your usual long-acting insulin-** Example: Normally 20 units
→ Take 10–15 units
- ✓ Bring all insulin and diabetes medications with you
- ✓ Check your blood sugar before leaving home
- ✓ Tell staff immediately if you feel dizzy, weak, or unwell



GLP-1 Medications (Ozempic, Trulicity, Wegovy, Rybelsus)

You **do not need to stop** these unless advised.

However:

- Fast for at least **12 hours from solid food**
- Fast for **6 hours from all liquids** (including clear fluids)

These medications slow stomach emptying. Longer fasting helps prevent nausea or vomiting under sedation.



Still Have Questions?

Every patient is different. If you're unsure about your medications or prep, please **contact our clinic** — we're here to help.