



How to Prepare for Your Colonoscopy

If you and your doctor decide that a colonoscopy is right for you...

...your doctor's office will give you instructions to help you prepare. A colonoscopy is one of several screening tests recommended by the American Cancer Society.¹ Review the instructions with your doctor in advance to be sure to answer any questions you might have.

Generally, on the day before your colonoscopy:

- ♥ **Change your diet.** You'll need to stop eating solid foods and start drinking clear liquids.²
- ♥ **Drink the "prep."** During the evening before the procedure, you must also drink a liquid "colon prep" substance that helps clean your bowels.²
- ♥ **Be prepared.** Check with your doctor to see if you should temporarily discontinue taking any prescription drugs or other medications before your colonoscopy.³
- ♥ **Reduce stress.** Schedule the time you need for the prep and plan for the privacy you need.²
 - If you have children, aging parents, or pets that need attention, you may want to arrange for additional support
- ♥ **Get creative.** When you are restricted to clear fluids, be ready with a variety of liquids. This can include clear broth, coffee or tea (without milk or creamer), soft drinks, Gatorade®, Italian ice, popsicles, and/or Jell-O®. But do not take anything with red, blue, or purple dye.²
- ♥ **Get comfortable.** Wear loose clothing and plan to stay in or near the bathroom.²
 - Consider keeping music, your laptop, magazines, or books with you for entertainment
- ♥ **Improve the taste of the liquid prep.** If the prescribed prep does not come flavored, try these tips²:
 - Add some Crystal Light® or Kool-Aid® powder (not red, blue, or purple)
 - Add a slice of ginger or lime
 - Drink it chilled
 - Hold a lemon or lime under your nose while you drink
 - Suck on a hard candy after each glass
- ♥ **Drink extra liquids.** Stay hydrated before, during, and after your colon prep (usually until a few hours before your procedure), as well as after your colonoscopy.²



These tips may be used as a guide, but always follow the instructions provided by your doctor.

To learn more about colorectal cancer and screening, visit

www.LoveYourColon.org

References: 1. Colorectal cancer screening tests. American Cancer Society website. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/screening-tests-used.html>. Accessed May 19, 2017.
2. Preparing for a colonoscopy. Harvard Health Publications website. <http://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/preparing-for-a-colonoscopy>. Accessed January 11, 2018.
3. Colonoscopy. Medline Plus website. <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003886.htm>. Accessed November 19, 2017.