

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Birmingham VA Medical Center

Your Outpatient Colonoscopy

- *What to expect*
- *How to prepare**
* *Two-day split-prep method*



Birmingham VA Medical Center

700 19th St South • Birmingham AL 35233



GI Lab, room 3336

(205) 933-8101, ext. 6592 / 5427

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am to 5pm

Dear Patient,

Thank you for your service and for choosing the Birmingham VA Medical Center for your health care! Two important reminders that will help make your upcoming colonoscopy as quick, comfortable, and effective as possible:

- 1. Please follow the bowel preparation instructions in this booklet -- NOT the instructions on the prep bottle!**



- 2. Please make sure you follow all diet and prep instructions so you have a clean colon for the procedure.** If the colon isn't clean, the doctor will not have a good look and you will need to repeat the colonoscopy.

If you have any questions after reading this booklet, please just call and ask. We'll be happy to help. -- *The GI Lab Staff*

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About this booklet

You're scheduled for a colonoscopy.

We know it can be difficult to get ready for a colonoscopy. We also know that you may have questions about the test. This booklet will help you get ready.

We created this booklet to help answer your questions. After you read this, go to page 6 and complete each item on the checklist as you prepare for your procedure.

A note on getting ready

The **MOST IMPORTANT** thing you can do is to empty out your colon by following the diet described in this booklet and taking the bowel preparation (“prep”) medicine prescribed by your doctor.

If you come in for your procedure with your colon properly emptied out, then we can make this “One and Done” — as in let’s do this once, let’s do it right, and let’s be done with it.

Doing it right—following the instructions for diet and for taking your prep—makes it much less likely that you’ll need to repeat the test.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a procedure where your doctor will insert a scope with a camera into your colon to get an inside picture of your colon.

The purpose of a colonoscopy is to look inside your colon for polyps, cancers, ulcers, and other conditions.

How does it work?

Just before the procedure starts, you will receive some medicine to make you sleepy. This medicine (a sedative) will help you avoid discomfort from the procedure.

The doctor will begin the colonoscopy by examining your rectum to make sure you do not have stool left in your bowels. The doctor will then inflate your colon with soft stream of air. This will help the doctor get a clear look in your colon. The doctor will then pass an endoscope through your anus and in your colon. He will look along the entire tract and may need to remove polyps.

You will likely not have any memory of the procedure.

One and Done:

Let's do this once, let's do it right, and let's be done with it.

Your doctor must be able to see in order to do the test right.

If it is dirty on the inside, your doctor may not be able to see important things, like polyps or blood, and may even have to do the test again.

That would mean you would have to start over, and repeat the bowel prep as well as the procedure.

It is extremely important to have a clean colon for the procedure. Otherwise the doctor will not have a good look and you will need to repeat the colonoscopy.

Imagine this:

Checking a clean colon is like driving a country road on a clear day. A dirty colon is like driving in a snowstorm.

If your colon is clean, doing a colonoscopy is like taking a road trip on a sunny day. It's easy to see and to drive.



If your colon isn't clean, doing a colonoscopy is like taking a drive in a snowstorm. It is hard to see and hard to drive.



My colonoscopy checklist

As you do each item, check it off. Make sure each box has been checked prior to coming in for your procedure.

Two weeks ahead *

(* At least 2 weeks before your procedure)

- Read this booklet carefully
- If needed, talk with your doctor about daily medications (*see page 8*)

Two days before your colonoscopy

- Drink clear liquids for breakfast – no solid food
- Drink clear liquids for lunch – no solid food
- Drink clear liquids for dinner – no solid food
- Take your bowel preparation in the evening as instructed

One day before your colonoscopy

- Drink clear liquids for breakfast – no solid food
- Clear liquids for lunch – no solid food
- Clear liquids for dinner – no solid food
- Take your bowel preparation in the evening as instructed
- By midnight, stop eating/drinking anything other than your prep

Day of your colonoscopy

- Do not eat breakfast
- Finish your prep as instructed
- Have nothing to eat or drink, including your prep, starting 4 hours before your procedure.
- Check appointment day reminders on page 32 and see the back cover of this booklet for tips on when to leave, where to park, and what to bring (and NOT bring) with you on appointment day.

Getting Ready: Steps 1-2-3

Step 1: Check on medications

If you take certain daily medications, you may need to contact your Primary Care Provider (PCP) and ask if you should make any temporary changes in your daily medication regimen during the pre-test colon cleaning process.

Any such checks should be done at least two weeks before the procedure. This is especially important if, for example, you take medications like these:

Diabetes:

Metformin (Glucophage)
Glipizide (Glucotrol)
Glyburide (Glynase)
Glimepiride (Amaryl)
Acarbose (Precose)
Pioglitazone (Actos)
Sitaglipton (Januvia)
Rosiglitazone (Avandia)
Exenatide (Byetta)
Insulin

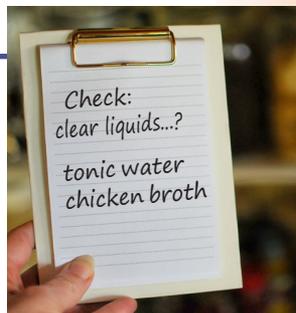
Blood thinners:

Warfarin (Coumadin)
Clopidogrel (Plavix)
Ticagrelor (Brilinta)
Dipyridamole (Persantine)
Prasugrel (Effient)
Rivaroxaban (Xarelto)
Dabigatran (Pradaxa)
Apixaban (Eliquis)
Enoxaparin (Lovenox)
Dipyridamole/aspirin
(Aggrenox)
Betrixaban (Bevyxxa)
Cilostazol (Pletal)



Step 2: Check on groceries

You will be placed on a limited diet of **clear liquids only** before your colonoscopy so that your colon is clean for the test.



Now is the time to find out exactly what kinds of food and drink you can have, so you can make sure you have enough of them on hand when the time comes. The next section of this booklet will discuss which food and drinks are **OK** and **NOT OK** to consume so your colon is properly cleansed and ready.

Step 3: Got 'The Prep'?

Be sure you have brought home the container of bowel preparation that you will drink in two 'split' doses before your procedure.

Also, please remember to follow the instructions in this booklet for taking the prep, NOT any instructions that may appear on the container. The instructions in this booklet will help you ensure that your colon is clear and clean when the time arrives.

What is a “Clear Liquid?”

As you get ready for your colonoscopy, you must only drink clear liquids. So how do you make sure that juice you’re pouring is considered a clear liquid and OK to drink?



Here’s one good test: A liquid is considered “clear” if you can read something through it.

Use this simple method to figure out what you **can** drink, and what you **cannot** drink.



Orange juice

It is not clear because you can't read the newspaper through it.

DO NOT drink this.



Pineapple juice

Same as before. If you can't read the newspaper through it,

DO NOT drink it.



Apple juice

You can read the newspaper through it. That means it is

OK to drink.

What Drinks are **OK**?

Clear sodas



Black coffee
(no milk or cream)



Clear sports drinks
(but no red or purple)





Water



Tea
(no milk or cream)



Apple juice

What Drinks Are **NOT** OK?



No milkshakes
or smoothies



No milk or
dairy products



No nutritional
drinks like
Ensure™





**No cranberry
juice**
*or any juices that
are **red** or **purple***



**No coffee with
milk or cream**



**No pineapple
or orange
juice**

What Foods Are **OK**?

Clear broths



**Broth
made from
bouillon**
*(with hot water
only; no other
additives)*





**Flavored
gelatin**
*(but no red
or purple)*



Honey

What Foods Are **NOT** OK?

No breads,
grains, or rice



No soup with
chunks of
food



No fruits





**No meat, fish,
or chicken**



**No dairy
products**



No vegetables

Two Days Before Your Colonoscopy

Time of day	What to eat	What to drink
 morning	Clear liquids for breakfast No solid food	Clear liquids
 afternoon	Clear liquids for lunch No solid food	Clear liquids
 night	Clear liquids for dinner No solid food Take prep	Clear liquids Start your prep at 6pm

What You Eat: You must NOT eat any solid foods two days before your colonoscopy. You may only have a clear liquid diet.

What You Drink: You must drink only clear liquids for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Be sure to drink water at the discretion of your physician (i.e. if you have any fluid restrictions). Any other fluids you drink will be in addition to what you need to drink for your bowel prep.

You will start taking your preparation this evening at 6pm.

Please follow this booklet's instructions for taking your split-dose bowel prep.

- You can mix your Miralax prep with either Gatorade or Crystal Light. (Stick with Crystal Light if you are diabetic.)
- Start drinking the prep at 6pm.
- Keep drinking until the entire bottle is finished.



A timely tip

Please call the GI Lab immediately if you don't have your prep or if you still have questions about taking it:

(205) 933-8101, ext. 6592 / 5427

But please remember: we're open Monday through Friday, 8am to ***5pm***, so don't wait until it's too late to call!



One Day Before Your Colonoscopy

Time of day	What to eat	What to drink
 morning	Clear liquids for breakfast No solid food	Clear liquids
 afternoon	Clear liquids for lunch No solid food	Clear liquids
 night	Clear liquids for dinner No solid food Take prep	Start your prep at 6pm

What You Eat: You must NOT eat any solid foods the day before your colonoscopy. You may only have a clear liquid diet.

What You Drink: You must drink only clear liquids for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Be sure to drink water at the discretion of your physician (i.e. if you have any fluid restrictions). Any other fluids you drink will be in addition to what you need to drink for your bowel prep.

Start taking your preparation at 6pm the evening before your test.

Please follow this booklet's instructions for taking your split-dose bowel prep.

- Mix your Colyte prep with water.
- Drink **half** the bottle (2 liters) within a 2-hour period (between 6pm and 8pm).
- Stop by 8pm. That's it for now.
.....
- *Drink the second half of the prep 6 hours before your procedure start-time, again finishing it within 2 hours.*
- *You will stop drinking altogether 4 hours before your colonoscopy.*

The Day of Your Colonoscopy

Time of day	What to eat	What to drink
 morning	Finish prep 4 hours before procedure No solid food	Bowel prep with water No solid food
 afternoon	No food or drink	No food or drink
 night	Regular diet after procedure	Regular diet after procedure

What You Eat: You must not eat any solid foods prior to your colonoscopy, even if your colonoscopy is scheduled for the afternoon. After the test is over and once you are fully awake, you can eat a regular diet.

What You Drink: Do not drink anything other than your bowel prep. Stop drinking altogether 4 hours before your colonoscopy.

Taking the Rest of Your Prep:

You took the first half of your “split preparation” yesterday (between 6pm and 8pm). Today you will drink the second half.

- Start drinking the second half of the bowel preparation medicine 6 hours before your colonoscopy and finish it within 2 hours.
- You will stop drinking altogether 4 hours before your colonoscopy.
- If your procedure is early in the morning, then this means you will have to get up very early to take this second part of your preparation. We know it is hard to get up this early, but it is very important that you take the preparation this way.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will the test take?

The test itself takes about 10-30 minutes. But there may be wait time before the procedure and time for recovery after the procedure. Expect to be here about 3-4 hours in all.

What are the side effects of the bowel preparation?

Expect to have diarrhea from the bowel preparation. This will start anywhere from a few minutes to 3 hours after you start your preparation. So plan to be in your home or somewhere you can easily access a restroom.

Most people have bloating and abdominal discomfort. This is normal. Do not be alarmed if you feel these symptoms.

Many people have nausea. This is also normal. Some people do not like the taste or smell of the medicine. Please do not let this get in the way of taking the medicine as directed. Refrigerating often helps with the taste.

Rarely, some people throw up while taking the preparation. If this happens, stop taking the preparation and call your doctor.

My preparation hasn't started working yet. Is that OK?

Different people respond differently to the bowel preparation — some people start having diarrhea within minutes of taking the preparation, while others have no response for an hour or more.

If you have waited more than 3 hours without a response, then it may not be working well. Be sure you are drinking enough fluid, as instructed in this booklet.

If that doesn't work, take the second part of your preparation and continue to drink fluids. It should work eventually.

Call your doctor if the medicine is still not working at all despite drinking enough fluid and taking the medicine as prescribed.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know when my bowel prep is complete?

The stool coming out should look like the stuff you are eating and drinking — clear, without many particles.

You know you're done when the stool coming out is yellow, light, liquid, and clear—like urine.

Use the guide at right to help you decide.



Very dark
and murky
NOT OK



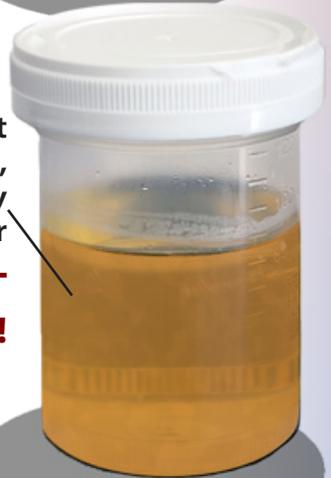
Brown
and murky
NOT OK



Dark
orange,
semi-clear
NOT OK



Light
orange,
mostly
clear
**ALMOST
THERE!**



Yellow and clear,
like urine

YOU'RE READY!

Your colonoscopy appointment:

_____ at _____
date time

Other Key Dates

Check on possible adjustments to daily medications:

_____ Complete by: _____
date

_____ Yes, completed _____ No, not required

Pre-appointment liquids and prep:

_____ Start clear liquids morning of: _____
date

_____ Start bowel prep at 6pm on: _____
date

Appointment Day

_____ No breakfast

_____ Followed any instructions for medications

_____ Prep finished (at least 4 hours before appt)

_____ Driver with you for check-in/out

_____ ***Bring:*** Veterans ID, insurance cards (if needed)

_____ ***Don't bring:*** valuables (jewelry, etc.)

References

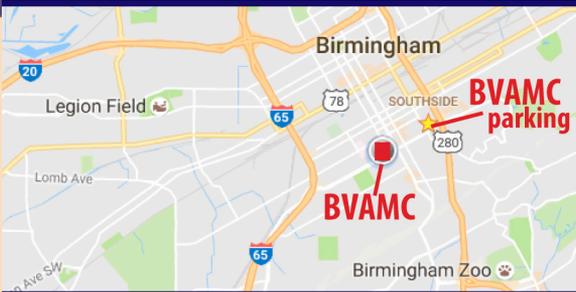
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If you cannot keep your appointment or have more questions, please call the GI Lab at (205) 933-8101, ext. 5427 or 6592

- Expect to be here for about 3-4 hours
- Check-in is on the 3rd floor, Room 3336
- Your driver must be present during check-in and check-out if you receive sedation



Parking Deck

*for the Birmingham VA Clinic and
Birmingham VA Medical Center:*

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Birmingham, AL 35233

Parking is free for Veterans and drivers accompanying patients. Free shuttles provide transportation between the parking deck and the medical center.

VA



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**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

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