

# COLONOSCOPY PREP INSTRUCTIONS

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## As Soon As Possible

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- Plan to take the day of the procedure off from work
- Find someone who can drive you to and from the appointment. He or she is required to stay at DHMC.
- If you are taking any blood thinning medications (including Plavix, Coumadin/warfarin, or any other blood thinner), please contact the prescribing provider to ask if you can temporarily stop these medications. Call us if you are not able to stop these medications for the procedure. There is no need to stop your aspirin.



## 2-7 Days Before Your Procedure

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- Fill your prescription for the enclosed Nulytely prep.
- Buy 4 tablets of bisacodyl (each tablet is 5mg) at your pharmacy (no prescription needed).



## The Day Before Your Procedure

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- Begin a strict **clear liquid diet** as soon as you wake up. Do not eat any solid food. Examples of clear liquids include water, white grape juice, popsicles, apple juice, chicken/beef broth, tea/coffee without cream/milk, ginger ale, sprite, Crystal Light, Jello.
- 3:00pm:** Take **all 4** tablets of bisacodyl at once
- 4:00pm to ~6:00pm:** Mix the Nulytely with water as directed. Start drinking Nulytely. Drink  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the laxative solution. Drink 8 ounces every 15 minutes. If you have nausea, please see the Frequently Asked Questions.



## The Day of Your Procedure

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- Please take your regular medications with a sip of water in the morning unless otherwise instructed. Please see FAQs for further instructions.**
- If you have diabetes:** Take  $\frac{1}{2}$  of your morning insulin and skip diabetic pills, unless told otherwise by your primary care.
- 6 hours before your procedure time, drink the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your laxative solution. Drink 8 ounces every 15 minutes. Finish 4 hours prior to your arrival time (we recognize that this will be very early in the morning for some who have morning procedures). The goal is for your bowel movements to be clear liquid or a light yellow color.
- Stop drinking liquids (including water) 4 hours prior to your procedure.



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## After Your Procedure

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- You will be brought back to the recovery room where your chaperone can join you.
- You will be given a copy of your colonoscopy report.
- You will likely be able to resume your usual diet after your procedure, unless instructed otherwise.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. What is a colonoscopy?

a. A colonoscopy is a procedure where a specially trained doctor uses a thin, lighted, flexible tube to examine the large intestine (colon). If polyps are found, they can be painlessly removed during your procedure.

### 2. What are the risks of colonoscopy?

a. A colonoscopy is safe overall, but risks can occur. The risks for a colonoscopy include: causing a tear in the colon (medical term: perforation); bleeding; infection; damage or bruising to the other organs in the abdomen; having a reaction to the sedating medication; or missing a polyp or cancer. If you have any further questions, please watch the Emmi video (a link was sent to your email) or ask the doctor prior to the procedure.

### 3. Do I need to have someone bring and stay with me?

a. **YES!** Your chaperone will need to bring you and stay on the medical campus during your procedure. It is unsafe for you to drive home after your procedure because you will be given sedating medications that make you sleepy. Your chaperone will be given a pager to let him/her know when you are done with your procedure. **There are no exceptions.**

### 4. What should I do if the pharmacy gave me a different prep instruction?

a. Please follow the DHMC instructions. Ignore the pharmacy instructions.

### 5. What if the pharmacy gives me a different prep solution than the prescription was written for?

a. It is likely that the pharmacy provided you with a generic (non-brand name) solution or a close substitute. These substitutes should be essentially the same as the one we prescribed and can be taken following the DHMC instructions.

### 6. Should I take my medications before my colonoscopy?

a. **You should plan to take all of your medications, unless instructed below.**

**Drink a small sip of water to take your regular medications the morning of the procedure. Blood thinners:** If you take clopidogrel (Plavix), warfarin (Coumadin), dabigatran (Pradaxa), or any other blood thinning medications, please call your cardiologist or primary care provider **at least** 10 days prior to your procedure for instructions to see if you can temporarily stop these medications. If you are **not** able to stop the medication call us at 603-650-5030. Different medications need to be stopped at different times. The number of days to hold the medication before the procedure will depend on the medication. If the prescribing provider is unsure, please call us at 603-650-5030.

b. **Aspirin:** You should always take your aspirin. There is no reason to stop your aspirin.

#### c. **Diabetes Medications:**

i. **Insulin:** If you are taking insulin, you should take ½ the amount of insulin in the morning of your procedure.

ii. **Other Diabetes Medications:** Please do not take your other diabetes medications the day of your procedure, unless otherwise instructed. If you

have further questions about your diabetes medications, please call the provider who prescribes those medications.

- d. **Pain Medications:** Please take your medications as you typically do.
- e. **Iron:** Please stop iron supplements 1 week prior to your procedure. Multivitamins that contain some iron can be continued.
7. **What if my doctor says I am not allowed to stop my blood thinning medications?**
  - a. Please call and let us know this information.
8. **What should I do if the prep has made me nauseated or if I vomited?**
  - a. This can be a common reaction to the colonoscopy prep. If you begin to feel full or experience nausea, stop drinking. Wait an hour or more until the feeling of nausea goes away. Then start drinking the prep again. Walk around. Then slowly start drinking the prep. Drinking it through a straw and keeping it in the refrigerator to keep it cold will help. You can mix the prep with 7 up, Crystal light, or ginger ale. Remember that the cleaner the colon is the more easily the doctor can see your colon during the procedure.
9. **I am unable to complete my prep. What should I do?**
  - a. If your bowel movements are yellow or clear, you can stop for the night. You still need to wake up in the morning and take more prep. Stool and liquid continues passing into the colon overnight. Please understand that if your bowel movements are not clear you may need to repeat the procedure.
  - b. If your bowel movements are not clear, please call at 8 am the morning of your procedure to discuss strategies to improve your prep or see if you need to reschedule.
10. **My prep tastes awful. Can I flavor it?**
  - a. Yes! We recommend flavoring each glass with a different flavor. Start with Crystal Light and mix each glass with a different flavor. If needed, you can add a little ginger ale, 7up, or lemonade. Some patients prefer the prep warm, mixed with a chicken or beef bouillon cube for flavor.
11. **Do I really need to drink the prep in the morning?**
  - a. Definitely! This is the most important part of your prep. Overnight stool will continue to accumulate in your intestines. The prep in the morning will help clear this.
12. **What can I expect immediately after my colonoscopy?**
  - a. After your colonoscopy, you will wake up at the end of your procedure or in the recovery room where your chaperone can join you. You will get a copy of your procedure report. You will also be given something to drink. Please bring a snack if you would like to eat something right away. If biopsies or polyps were removed, they are sent down to the pathology laboratory for examination under the microscopic. You will get a letter in the mail or a message on my-DH with the results, usually within a couple of weeks.
  - b. You may have some mild gassiness and bloating after the procedure that will improve throughout the day. You should not have any new pain. If you have significant pain or other issues that worry you, please call us.
13. **Are there any restrictions after my colonoscopy?**
  - a. After your colonoscopy, you should not drive, operate machinery, or make major life decisions for 24 hours. The sedating medication you receive can alter your judgment.
14. **For more detailed information about your procedure,** please watch the Emmi colonoscopy video (a link was sent to your email) or ask the doctor prior to the procedure. If you did not get an email, please call 603-650-5030 during business hours to request a link.

If you have any other questions please call 603-650 8362 between 8:00am and 5:00pm. For after hour emergencies, you can call 603-650-5000 and have the on call gastroenterologist paged.