Colonoscopy Frequently Asked Questions

**Why do I need to have someone drive me home?**
You will be receiving sedative medications which will make it unsafe and illegal for you to drive.

**Why do I have to have someone accompany me home from my procedure?**
You MUST arrange for a responsible person to hear your discharge instructions and ensure you make it home safely. OHSU policy requires you to have a person with you at discharge. If you arrive without a plan for someone to accompany you home, we will be unable to perform your procedure and we will have to reschedule you for another day.

**Why do I have to drink the prep solution for my colonoscopy?**
The solution & clear liquids will cleanse the colon. If the colon is not clean polyps and other lesions may be missed and not removed decreasing the ability of the test to prevent cancers from arising later.

**Why can’t I take all prep the day before procedure?**
Studies show that splitting the solution into two doses cleans the bowel better. You must take the preparation in two doses; half the day before and half the morning of, regardless of the time you’re scheduled.

**I have an early morning appointment- do I really need to wake up in the night to drink the 2nd half of the bowel preparation solution?**
Yes. Even without anything to eat, your stomach will produce fluids that can make it difficult to see inside of your colon using a scope. You must complete the last half of the solution as close to the appointment as possible, while making sure it is finished working before you travel. This is why we instruct you to start drinking the 2nd half of the bowel prep solution 4 hours before you leave your house to come in for your appointment.

**Is there any way I can make the prep solution taste better?**
Add Crystal Light powder to it (no red or purple varieties). Suck on a Popsicle to numb your tongue before drinking the prep solution (no red or purple). Chill the prep solution and use a straw. Rinse your mouth with water or a mouthwash.

**I drank a lot of the prep solution and have not gone to the bathroom yet. What should I do?**
Keep drinking clear liquids. Most people have a bowel movement after an hour; some people may take two hours or longer. If you have not had a bowel movement 2 hours after completing the evening dose of prep solution continue drinking clear liquids until you have a bowel movement. Stop drinking the bowel prep solution and contact our office if you experience distention or bloating, pain, or vomiting.

**Can I have chicken soup before the procedure?**
No. You can have only broth; no noodles, rice, chicken or vegetables are allowed.
I am taking the prep solution and now having loose, watery stools. Do I still need to take the rest of the solution?
Yes. Without a complete prep the residual stool may prevent an adequate exam by the doctor requiring you to be rescheduled or needing another exam sooner than usually recommended.

I have an afternoon appointment- do I really need to be on clear liquids for over 24 hours?
Yes. Starting the clear liquid diet at breakfast time, the day before your appointment will make it easier for the bowel preparation solution to do its job, and greatly improve the quality of your bowel preparation.

Why do I have to drink more clear liquids after I have already had half of gallon of the prep solution?
Increasing the amount of fluid you drink will help to clean out your colon and improve your preparation. Don’t count the prep solution as being part of your fluid volume.

Can I still take my Lisinopril and Hydrochlorothiazide medications while doing the bowel prep?
You may continue to take these medications. It is very important that you drink twice as many fluids as you normally would (in addition to the prep solution) to avoid feeling dehydrated.

I have chronic diarrhea. Do I still have to take the prep solution?
Yes. You must take the entire prep solution as directed. You will still need the prep solution and the clear liquids to wash the lining of the colon. The entire colon must be empty for your doctor to see it clearly. A poor prep may prevent you from having a good exam and require you to be rescheduled or have another exam sooner than normally recommended.

I see yellow color in the toilet bowl and a few flecks. What do I do?
If you drank all the solution and your last bowel movements were clear enough that you were able to see the bottom of the toilet, you should be fine. It is okay if you have some small flecks of stool. The yellow color is normal. If you still have brown stool, drink more water to help thin the stool and wash the lining of the colon.

My bottom is so sore. What can I do?
When cleaning the area avoid rubbing. Gently pat with a wet washcloth or disposable wet wipe. Apply Vaseline or A&D ointment liberally. You may use a medicated wipe such as Tucks. Warm baths or sitz baths are also helpful.

Why have I been prescribed more than 1 gallon of bowel preparation solution?
When the doctor decides your preparation prescription he or she takes into consideration health history, prescribed medications, and success with previous bowel preparations.

What if I have a history of difficult peripheral IV starts?
Please arrive to your appointment 15 minutes before your assigned arrival time and let the reception staff know that your IV start may take extra time.