

## **General Guidelines for your Colonoscopy**

### **Why it is performed:**

A colonoscopy is an endoscopic procedure used to examine the large intestine.

You doctor may recommend this procedure for:

- Changes in your bowel habits
- Blood in your stool
- Unexplained anemia
- Screening for colon cancer

### **Before the procedure:**

- The hospital will call you a few days before your procedure to tell you what time to arrive. If you need information before receiving this call you call the hospital PAT department at **732-828-3000 extension 36616**. If you need to confirm your arrival time after you have received this call you can call the endoscopy schedulers at **732-253-3210**.
- Arrival times are given to admit you to the unit and prepare you for your procedure. It is important that you arrive at your given time. ***Please Note: Unlike surgery centers this unit treats both inpatients and outpatients and emergencies may arise that may cause delays in scheduled procedure. Please be patient and know that we will provide you with the best care when you go into your procedure. Due to the unpredictable nature of procedure units, please be prepared to spend the day here.***
- Some procedures or recoveries require a hospitalization that we may not always be able to predict, so be prepared to stay in the hospital if necessary.
- Do not bring any valuables or wear any jewelry the day of your procedure as we do not have space for you to secure belongings.
- Because you will be given medication to put you to sleep for the procedure, you will need to bring someone with you to take you home. You cannot drive or take public transportation alone for 24 hours after the procedure. We have limited space in the waiting area and we only can allow one visitor to wait during your procedure.
- If you need to send proof of your COVID vaccine please email it to [VaccineStatus@rwjbh.org](mailto:VaccineStatus@rwjbh.org)

PREP/DIET

**Miralax Prep (polyethylene glycol 3350)** (To be taken for all lower procedures, unless you were instructed by your physician to follow a different prep)

**Please Note:** *if you had a colonoscopy in the past and the MiraLAX did not work for you, your doctor may have prescribed a Golytely prep or a 2-day prep. Please see additional hand out for those prep instructions if needed.*

Supplies Needed

- Four (4) Dulcolax (Bisacodyl) 5mg tablets (available over-the-counter at the pharmacy)
- Miralax (polyethylene glycol 3350) 238 grams of powder (as marked on the container, available over-the-counter at the pharmacy)
- 64 ounces of clear liquids (any color you can see through except red or purple) – Gatorade, unsweetened iced tea, or water. *If you are diabetic or have kidney disease use water crystal light instead of Gatorade.*

5 Days Before Your Procedure

- Read all prep instructions
- Contact your prescribing physician for instructions on blood thinners
- Stop herbal, oil-based vitamins and iron supplements
- Stop all fiber supplements such as Metamucil, Citrucel, Fibercon, Benefiber, and Konsyl
- Stop all medications that stop diarrhea such as immodium (Loperamide), Kaopectate (bismuth subsalicylate, and pepto bismol (bismuth subsalicylate).

Day Before the Procedure

- **DO NOT** eat any solid food.
- Drink **clear liquids only** for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, also drink at least 8 ounces of clear liquids every hour while awake.
  - Water (plain, carbonated, or flavored)
  - Fruit juices without pulp, such as apple or white grape juice
  - Fruit flavored beverages, such as fruit punch or lemonade
  - Carbonated drinks, including dark sodas (cola and root beer)
  - Gelatin (not red or purple)
  - Tea or coffee without milk or cream
  - Sports drinks (not red or purple)
  - Clear, **fat-free** broth (bouillon or consommé)
  - Honey or sugar

- Hard candy, such as lemon drops or peppermint rounds
- Ice pops without milk, bits of fruit, seeds or nuts

**How to prepare your Miralax:** Mix and stir the entire bottle of Miralax (polyethylene glycol 3350) 238 grams of powder with the 64 ounces of clear liquid you purchased above. You may need to do this in a separate container or pitcher. The drink will taste better if it is chilled. When not in use, the mixture must be kept refrigerated.

***If your arrival time is before 12 Noon***

- At **4pm** the day before the procedure start to drink the first half (32 ounces) of the solution. Drink 1 glass (about 8 ounces) of the Miralax mixture every 15 minutes until the first half of the solution is finished.
  - *If you are too full or have nausea/vomiting, stop for 20-30 minutes, then start again. Refrigerate remaining solution.*
- **One hour after** you complete the first half of the Miralax mixture, take the 4 Dulcolax tablets with a glass of water.
- At **10pm** Start drinking the second half (remaining 32 ounces) of Miralax mixture. Drink 1 glass (about 8 ounces) of the Miralax mixture every 15 minutes until the second half of the solution is finished.
  - *If you are too full or have nausea/vomiting, stop for 20-30 minutes, then start again. Refrigerate remaining solution.*

***If your arrival time is after 12 Noon***

- At **5pm** the day before the procedure start to drink the first half (32 ounces) of the solution. Drink 1 glass (about 8 ounces) of the Miralax mixture every 15 minutes until the first half of the solution is finished.
  - *If you are too full or have nausea/vomiting, stop for 20-30 minutes, then start again. Refrigerate remaining solution.*
- **One hour after** you complete the first half of the Miralax mixture, take the 4 Dulcolax tablets with a glass of water.
- At **6am** the Morning of your procedure start drinking the second half (remaining 32 ounces) of Miralax mixture. Drink 1 glass (about 8 ounces) of the Miralax mixture every 15 minutes until the second half of the solution is finished.
  - *If you are too full or have nausea/vomiting, stop for 20-30 minutes, then start again. Refrigerate remaining solution.*

**\*\*\*\*\*Finish Drinking 4 hours before your arrival time\*\*\*\*\***

Day of Procedure

- **No Solid Food**
- **No Alcohol**
- **Do Not** drink anything unless you are still completing the Miralax prep.
- **No** gum or breath mints
- **You May** take your morning heart, blood pressure, asthma, seizure medication, and aspirin with a small sip of water.
- **PLEASE STOP ALL LIQUIDS 4 HOURS BEFORE YOUR ARRIVAL TIME.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** You must take all of the Prep solution as directed to clean your bowel adequately. Even if you are passing clear liquid you must continue to take the entire dose of the prep.

Medications

- If you are taking medications for high blood pressure, seizures, or if you are taking prednisone, you may take these medications the morning of the procedure or at least 2 hours before the procedure with a small sip of water.
- If you are diabetic:
  - If you take a “sugar” pill, **do not** take it on the day of your procedure.
  - If you are taking regular insulin (R), **do not** take it on the day of your procedure.
  - If you are taking any other insulin preparation, please contact your prescribing physician for instructions.
- If you are taking Coumadin (Warfarin), Plavix (clopidogrel), or other blood thinners contact your prescribing physician for instructions on when to stop taking this medication.
- If you are taking aspirin daily continue to take this medication.
- Tell your doctor if you have allergies.

**Day of procedure:**

Your procedure will be done at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in the endoscopy suite on the second floor above Walgreens. The address is:

1 Robert Wood Johnson Place  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Arrive 1 ½ hours before your scheduled procedure time. When you arrive you will register and give your medical history. You will need a responsible adult with you who will accompany you home. Bring with you a photo ID, insurance card, a list of medications that you take.

## **PARKING**

- Park in the hospital parking lot located on Little Albany Street and take the elevator to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Bring your parking ticket with you when you enter the hospital. Upon arrival stop at the information desk on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor to check in and have your parking validated. Turn left as you exit the elevator on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and take the North building elevators located in the main lobby to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. When you get out of the elevators make a right and another quick right. At the end of that hallway make a left, pass the Cardiac Cath lab and a set of elevators on your right. You will then see the Endoscopy department on your left-hand side above Walgreens and Starbucks.

## **During Colonoscopy:**

- We will start an IV in your vein to give fluids, medications to put you to sleep, and other needed medications.
- Once you are asleep, the doctor will perform a digital rectal exam, placing a gloved lubricated finger inside your rectum.
- The colonoscope will pass through your rectum, through the colon to the cecum. A video camera on the colonoscope will show images of your colon on a nearby monitor that the doctor will view.
- Your colon will be filled with air or carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) to improve visibility.
- A biopsy may be done if needed to send samples to the laboratory for testing. This is done by inserting instruments through the colonoscope.

## **After procedure:**

Once the procedure is finished you will recover from anesthesia in the endoscopy unit. Your doctor will discuss the procedure with you. *Please be advised, it is common after receiving anesthesia to forget some of the conversation you had with your doctor. For this reason, we suggest a family member be available for this conversation at your request.*

Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or drink alcohol for 24 hours after your procedure. You should go home and rest after your procedure.

We recommend that you eat something light since you have not eaten for over 8 hours. Avoid fried foods, fatty foods and large quantities of food. Things such as: scrambled eggs, toast, a sandwich are good choices. You may eat more food once you have tried something light to make sure you do not become sick to your stomach. You may also have excess gas, so you may choose to avoid foods that cause additional gas, such as beans or carbonated beverages.

Call your doctor right away for:

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- Severe or new onset abdominal pain that doesn't improve by passing gas
- Rectal bleeding that turns the entire toilet bowl red
- Fever greater than 101.5 or chills
- Vomiting blood, black or coffee ground looking material
- Severe dizziness, fainting or chest pain

**Common Side Effects:**

- Nausea or Vomiting
- Excessive gas, bloating or cramping

**Please Note:** *These symptoms should improve with each day. Should any of these symptoms be more severe in nature or longer in duration than your doctor has described, please contact your doctor.*

**Medications after discharge:**

You can continue your daily medications following your procedure. If you are taking any medications that thin your blood, discuss with your doctor when to resume these medications.

Commonly prescribed blood thinners:

- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto)
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa)
- Apixaban (Eliquis)
- Heparin
- Warfarin (Coumadin)
- Clopidogrel (Plavix)
- Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid)
- Enoxaparin (Lovenox)
- Ticagrelor (Brilinta)

**Follow up:**

Contact your physician to schedule a follow up appointment:

**Clinical Academic Building (CAB)**

125 Paterson Street

Suite 5100B

New Brunswick, NJ 08901

**Phone: 732-235-7784**

**IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:**

Rutgers GI Clinic: 732-235-7784

Robert Wood Johnson Schedulers: 732-828-3000 x33210

GI clinic Schedulers: 732-235-5973

Interventional GI clinic Schedulers: 732-235-8970

Hospital PAT department **732-828-3000** x36616

For after hour **emergencies** call 732-235-778

**FAQs:**

**Has colonoscopy been shown to be effective in preventing colon cancer?**

Yes, colonoscopy accomplishes this by detecting and removing polyps, and detecting early cancers. Recent data show that both the number of new cases of colon cancer and deaths from the disease are decreased when colonoscopy is performed.

**Are there other methods to examine by colon besides colonoscopy?**

Yes, there are alternative methods to examine the colon, but none are considered more accurate at colon cancer and polyp detection than colonoscopy.

**Is colonoscopy painful?**

No, colonoscopy is usually not painful. Colonoscopies are done using IV sedation.

**I forgot I was not supposed to eat seeds, or I ate one of the things on the list that I wasn't supposed to. Can I still do my colonoscopy the next day?**

Yes, usually one or two dietary mistakes will not ruin the preparation or the ability of your physician to see what needs to be seen at the time of colonoscopy. Please make sure to notify your doctor before the procedure.

**What can I do if I don't like the taste of the preparation? Is there anything I can take to make it taste better?**

Yes, add a flavor packet from the pharmacy or a powdered flavoring like crystal light (lemon or lime flavors are best). Drink through a straw placed in the back of your mouth so you don't taste it, hold your nose or cover the cup with a lid so you don't smell it, suck on something sweet like hard candies or something sour, such as lemon or lime wedges or sour candies. You can also try menthol cough drops to numb the taste buds.

**When will I start having bowel movements and what should I do if I don't have a bowel movement?**

Everyone is different. You may start having bowel movements before finishing the entire prep or you may not have results until after you have completed the entire prep. It may start suddenly. Once it starts you will have frequent bowel movements and each time it should get clearer until you see only clear-ish, yellow-ish fluid with little or no particles. It should look like urine. Regardless you must finish the entire prep even if your output is clear. Failure to do so may result in a poor preparation which may make it difficult for the physician to see adequately during your colonoscopy. This may result in the need to cancel your colonoscopy and reschedule the examination for another day.



