

Preparing for Your Colonoscopy

(For Kids and Parents)

What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test that helps doctors look inside your large intestine (colon) to check for any problems. The doctor uses a long, flexible tube with a camera on the end to look around and sometimes take a small sample (biopsy) if needed.

How Do I Get Ready for My Colonoscopy?

Here's how to get prepared for the big day. It might sound a bit tricky, but don't worry — we'll help you through it!

1. You Need to Clean Your Colon

Before the test, your colon needs to be clean so the doctor can see everything clearly. This means you will need to drink a special liquid (called "prep") and follow a special diet.

2. What You Can and Can't Eat and Drink

You will need to follow a special eating and drinking plan for a few days before your colonoscopy.

- **2-3 Days Before the Test:**
 - **No solid foods** like meat, bread, vegetables, or fruit.
 - You can only eat **clear liquids** like:
 - Water
 - Clear broth or soup (without any chunks)
 - Clear fruit juice (without pulp, like apple or white grape juice)
 - Sports drinks (without red or purple dye)
 - Popsicles (without red or purple coloring)
 - Jell-O (without red or purple coloring)
 - **The Day Before the Test:**
 - **Only clear liquids** again. You will need to drink lots of liquids to stay hydrated and help clean out your colon.
 - **No solid foods** at all!
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3. The Prep Drink

You'll need to drink a special liquid (called the prep drink) to help clean out your colon. This might not taste very good, but it's important to drink all of it — just like the doctor says.

- **How it works:**
You'll drink the prep liquid at certain times during the day before the test. The drink will make you go to the bathroom more often, so make sure you stay near a bathroom! It helps clean everything out.
 - **Tip:**
If the drink tastes bad, try chilling it in the fridge or drinking it through a straw. You can also rinse your mouth with water after you drink it to help with the taste.
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4. The Day of the Test

On the day of your colonoscopy, here's what will happen:

- **Arrive at the hospital or clinic:** Make sure you arrive on time for your appointment.
 - **Getting ready:** A nurse will check your height, weight, and vitals (like your heart rate). You'll also get an IV (a small needle) in your arm. This will help give you medicine to keep you relaxed and sleepy during the test.
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5. What Happens During the Colonoscopy?

When the test begins, you will be given a special medicine (sedation) so you will be asleep or very relaxed and won't feel anything.

- The doctor will gently insert a tube into your body through your bottom (rectum). It might feel a little strange or uncomfortable, but you will be asleep and won't feel pain.
 - The doctor uses the tube to look inside your colon and make sure everything is okay. If needed, the doctor may take a small tissue sample (biopsy) or remove any polyps (growths) from the colon.
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6. After the Test

When the test is done, you will wake up in a recovery area. It's normal to feel a little groggy or sleepy for a while.

- **Eating and Drinking:** Once you're awake and feeling better, you can start eating and drinking again. The nurse will make sure you're feeling okay before you go home.

- **Going Home:** You'll need someone to take you home after the procedure since the medicine can make you feel sleepy or dizzy. You'll be okay, but you should rest at home the rest of the day.
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7. How Will I Feel Afterward?

- **Feeling Tired or Gassy:** After the test, you might feel a little tired or have some gas or bloating in your tummy. This is normal because of the air that was used during the test.
 - **Back to Normal:** You can go back to your usual activities the next day, but remember to rest and drink plenty of fluids.
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Important Reminders:

- **Follow the prep instructions carefully** to make sure your colon is clean and the test goes well.
 - **Stay hydrated** by drinking plenty of clear liquids the day before and the day of your colonoscopy.
 - **Talk to your doctor or nurse** if you have any questions or if something doesn't feel right during the prep.
 - **Bring someone with you** to drive you home after the procedure, since the medicine can make you sleepy.
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We're here to help!

Everyone at the hospital or clinic will take good care of you and make sure you're comfortable. You're doing an awesome job by preparing ahead of time!
