



Colonoscopy Frequently Asked Questions

***What is the purpose of the clear liquid diet the day before my procedure?**

The average colon is approximately 5 feet long and 3 inches in diameter. During a colonoscopy, your doctor examines the lining of the colon for pre-cancerous polyps that are as small as 3 millimeters in size. Any amount of food the day before will cause your body to create stool, which will make it more difficult for the polyps to be found. In some cases, there may be so much retained stool that your doctor can not perform the exam and it will need to be rescheduled. Adhering to a clear liquid diet will help ensure that your colon is as clean as possible.

***Why must I stop drinking 3 hours before my procedure?**

Drinking any amount of liquid, even a small sip of water, within 3 hours of a sedated procedure increases the risk of aspiration during the procedure. Aspiration occurs when stomach contents are inhaled into the lungs, and can cause serious and life-threatening complications. To reduce this risk as much as possible, it is imperative that you stop drinking all liquids 3 hours before your appointment.

***Why can't I drive myself home or take a taxi/Uber following my procedure?**

Anesthesia has effects similar to alcohol consumption. Your balance, judgment, skill, and memory will all be compromised. **Driving a car puts you and others on the road at risk.** We require you to have a family member or friend present at the time of your appointment to drive you home. They will be asked to sign a document that states they are taking responsibility for your care. A taxi or Uber driver will not be able to vouch for your safety, and we will not be able to perform your procedure without verifying that you have an appropriate escort immediately available.

***Why is the prep split into two parts? Can I drink it all at once if I have an early morning appointment?**

Splitting the prep into two parts is a more effective way to empty the colon of stool, which will aid in the detection of polyps. The first dose starts the process by cleaning out the left side of the colon, but the second dose is needed to clean out the right side as well. Additionally, the prep process will require you to drink a large volume of liquid in a short amount of time. Splitting the prep into two smaller doses is easier for most patients to tolerate. Even for an early morning procedure, we ask that you follow the instructions and split the prep into two doses.



***My spouse was given a different prep than I was. Why is this?**

There are many different products available to prepare for a colonoscopy. Your doctor has recommended a prep for you based on your individual health history, your bowel habits, and how effective they've found the product to be in the past.

***This is my first colonoscopy and I am nervous. What can I expect the day of the procedure?**

After you check in at the front desk, one of our registered nurses will bring you back to the procedure suite. He or she will explain the procedure in detail, answer any questions you have, and have you sign consents for the procedure and anesthesia. Your complete health history will be reviewed, including any medications you take. If you are a female of childbearing age, we will ask you for a urine specimen at this time.

Once you have been admitted by the nurse, you will change into a gown and be given a warm blanket. An IV will be started, and IV fluids will be administered. In the procedure room, we will apply a blood pressure cuff, a pulse oximeter, and EKG leads to monitor your heart rate and rhythm.

Before the procedure begins, you will have a chance to speak to your anesthesiologist and gastroenterologist. They will address any concerns you have prior to the anesthesia being given. Before the procedure starts, you will turn onto your left side. The anesthesiologist will give you medicine through the IV, and you will fall asleep. The gastroenterologist, the anesthesiologist, and at least one registered nurse will be with you the entire time, and your safety and comfort are the top priority.

A colonoscopy typically takes twenty to thirty minutes. After your procedure is completed, you will be transferred to the recovery room. A registered nurse will monitor you for half an hour. He or she will take several sets of vital signs, and will review your post-procedure instructions. Your gastroenterologist will discuss your procedure results, including any follow-up needed. You will be given a folder prior to discharge which contains your procedure report, an anesthesia information sheet, and educational materials specific to your findings.

We understand that undergoing a sedated procedure can be nerve-wracking, particularly if it's your first time. Please rest assured that the doctors and nurses in the procedure suite take your safety extremely seriously. We are always available to answer questions or review instructions, and our goal is for you to have the most pleasant experience possible.