

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a clear stool?

A clear stool can have a slight tint of yellow or brown. It will be completely transparent and will not contain any solid matter. The bottom of the toilet can be seen through clear stool.

2. I am not having bowel movements. What should I do?

Bowel movements can take up to 2 hours to start after beginning the prep, but may take 5-6 hours, depending on the person. Be patient, continue to drink clear liquids. If you have not had a bowel movement by midnight the night prior to your procedure, you should obtain a bottle of magnesium citrate (296mL), from your local pharmacy, and drink the entire bottle.

3. I am already having clear stool. Do I still need to finish my entire prep?

Yes. Your body is continuously producing fluid which coats the colon, even if you are not consuming solid foods. Taking the entire prep ensures this fluid is cleaned out and increases the quality of your exam.

4. The prep is making me nauseous. What should I do?

If you develop nausea or vomiting, stop and take a 30 minute break from drinking the bowel prep. After nausea has decreased or stopped, you can resume drinking, but drink it at a slower rate. Chilling the prep ahead of time can also help reduce nausea. Please attempt to drink all of the prep even if it takes you longer. If vomiting persists, or you are not able to finish the prep, stop and call our office for further instructions.

5. If I eat popcorn or seeds three days before my procedure, do I need to reschedule?

You will not need to reschedule your procedure; however the seeds or nuts may cause a difficulty in screening and require a need for rescreening. If you have eaten a large amount of seeds or nuts, please call our office to discuss further.

6. If I take an iron supplement one week before my procedure, do I need to reschedule?

If you do not stop taking your iron one week prior to the procedure, it is possible that the quality of the bowel prep may not be as good; however, it is recommended that you continue with the procedure. If you only took one or two doses, it should not affect the prep at all.

7. The pharmacy does not have my medication. What should I do?

First, ask the pharmacist if the medication has been re-shelved (sometimes this happens if the prescription is not filled within a few days after it was ordered). If this is not the case, please call our office and a member of our clinical team can call in the prescription. It is recommended that you pick up your medication AT LEAST one day prior to the day you start the bowel prep process.

8. I am diabetic and have questions about my medications. What should I do?

Please see the handout titled Diabetes Management Instructions for specific recommendations.

9. Can I drink ALCOHOL on the liquid diet?

Alcohol is not allowed as part of the clear liquid diet.

10. Can I continue to be on the liquid diet after I begin consuming the prep solution?

Yes, we encourage you to continue the clear liquid diet until you are directed to discontinue anything by mouth, which is typically **three (3) hours** before the procedure.

11. Why do I have to wake up so early for the second dose, can't I take it all the night before?

A split prep has proven to be the most effective for a successful colonoscopy. While this can make for an early morning, it is essential that you follow the directions provided with your prep medications so you have a good quality exam. If stool residue remains in your colon, your doctor may not be able to find and remove all polyps and cancer can be missed.

12. If I weigh under 100 pounds, do I need to take all of the prep?

The liquid amount is not weight dependent. It is important to finish the prep for a successful colonoscopy.

13. Can I take all my regular meds the day of the procedure?

You can take all your scheduled medications the day of the procedure except for **blood thinners and diabetic medications** (special instructions provided) or **3 hours prior** to procedure.

14. Do I need to take antibiotics prior to the colonoscopy?

Antibiotic prophylaxis is not recommended for colonoscopy because the risk of infection related to routine diagnostic or therapeutic colonoscopy is low.

15. I cannot find my prep instructions. What should I do?

Your prep instructions were either given to you at our office at the time of scheduling, mailed, or sent electronically via MyChart. If you have MyChart, the instructions can be found in the Messages section. A copy of our prep instructions can also be found on our website (<https://www.swedish.org/services/gastroenterology/online-resources>). If you still cannot find the instructions, please call our office.

16. Can I start my bowel prep later than 6pm?

It is recommended that you start the prep at the specified time; however, variation of 1-2 hours on either side of the recommended times is fine as long as you follow the clear liquid diet and the rest of the instructions.