



## Preparing for your Colonoscopy

You must have someone and/or a driver accompany you and stay with you for 24 hours after your procedure.

Patients who fail to bring a driver/someone to stay with them for the night will have their procedure cancelled immediately.

Please arrive at the Hospital one hour before your appointment time.

## What is a Colonoscopy?

A Colonoscopy is a safe procedure that gives your doctor information other tests may not be able to give, by examining the lower part of the gastrointestinal tract, which is called the colon or large intestine (bowel). It is performed by an endoscopist, a doctor with special training in endoscopy procedures.

The colonoscope is inserted into the anus and advanced through to the end of the colon (the cecum) and possibly a short distance into the small intestine. The procedure generally takes from 20 minutes to an hour.

In order to perform this procedure, the inside lining of your colon must be cleaned of stool to permit the endoscopist to perform a thorough examination. This is accomplished in two ways:

- by restricting what you eat.
- by giving you laxatives.

## Medication Information

Some medications such as iron preparations, should be discontinued for one to two weeks before the examination. Aspirin and pain killers such as Motrin (which contains ibuprofen) slightly increase the risk of bleeding.

If you take a blood thinning medication such as Warfarin (Coumadin), or Plavix (Clopidogrel) etc. consult with your doctor as to when you should stop taking it.



## Medication Information (continued)

Ask your doctor about medications for diabetes, heart or lung disease, high blood pressure, or seizure disorders. Your doctor may not want you to stop some of your medicines, and many of them can be taken even the day of the examination.

If you take antibiotics before dental procedures, ask your doctor if you need them before your colonoscopy.

## Eating Instructions

On the day before your test (as with all preparations) drink only clear fluids. NO solid food.

Four hours before your appointment time, **DO NOT DRINK OR EAT** anything.

If this preparation is unacceptable please contact your doctor's office for alternatives.

### What Not To Eat

As a general rule, you should not eat any solid food for at least one day before the examination.

You should drink only clear liquids (such as juices without pulp, bouillon, ginger ale) and eat only clear Jell-O. Stop all iron pills one week before test.

## Laxative Options

***Please choose one of the following options.***

A laxative will clean your bowel system and cause temporary diarrhea.

Some laxatives come in several flavors, which unfortunately only slightly mask a somewhat unpleasant taste. Flavored drink crystals can be added if you wish. Most people find it easier to drink the liquids cold so refrigerate for an hour or so before drinking.

Patients say drinking the laxative solution is the most unpleasant part of the examination, but don't worry, you'll get through it!



## **Laxative Options (continued)**

### **Golytly/Peglytly**

Both come as a powder inside a large bottle. Mix the powder with water as described on the side of the bottle (to a total volume of 4 litres). Drink it in the afternoon the day before your test.

### **Golytly Capsules**

These are available as a special order only, from Lawton's Drugs in Corner Brook (O'Connell Drive; 639-8971), or from Central Pharmacy in Grand Falls (489-5411). The order will consist of 400 – 500 capsules.

Drink clear liquids the day before your colonoscopy. One gallon of clear liquid must be taken with the capsules. Take all the capsules the day before your colonoscopy (starting in the afternoon and finish before 10:00 p.m).

### **Half Dose of Golytly**

Drink clear liquids the day before your colonoscopy. Drink 2 litres (one-half the bottle) of Golytley during the afternoon the day before the test. Drink 3 litres of any clear fluid after the Golytley is finished. Take 20 mg of bisacodyl (Dulcolax ) after the Golytley is finished.

### **Pico Salax/Purg-Odan**

Do not take Pico Salax/Purg-Odan if you have heart disease, kidney disease, or are taking a diuretic (fluid pill).

- Drink clear liquids for 2 days before your test.
- Drink 1 packet mixed in 45 ml (one-half cup) of water at 8:00 a.m. the day before your test.
- Drink a second packet at 4:00 p.m. the day before your test.
- The day before test drink 1 glass of water every hour for 12 hours starting at 8:00 a.m.
- If your appointment is in the afternoon, you can take 1 packet at 8:00 p.m. the day before your test and one at 7:30 a.m. on the day of the test.

If nausea is a problem Gravol (or another brand) can be taken an hour before any of these preparations.



## What do I need to bring?

- You must have someone and/or a driver accompany you and stay with you for 24 hours after your procedure. You cannot drive or work during this time.
- Patients who fail to bring a driver/someone to stay with them will have their procedure cancelled immediately.
- A list of your medications and the doses of these medications.
- A list of any allergies.
- Please leave jewelry and valuables at home.
- Body piercing and/or jewelry should be removed before the procedure.

## The Procedure

Register at the outpatient department at Western Memorial Regional Hospital (Corner Brook). After registering, follow the directions to the Endoscopy Suite on the first floor and have a seat in the waiting room. You will be called for your appointment.

Prior to the colonoscopy, a nurse will prepare you for the examination.

The nurse will start an intravenous line (put a needle in a vein in your arm) to administer medications to help you relax and keep you comfortable during the examination. Your vital signs will be monitored during the examination and for a time after the colonoscopy is over.

The colonoscopy will be performed with you lying on your left side. Medications will be administered through the intravenous line.

The colonoscope is a flexible tube, approximately the size of your index finger. It has a lens and a light source that allows the endoscopist to look into the scope or at a TV monitor.

The endoscope contains channels that allow the endoscopist to obtain biopsies (small pieces of tissue), remove polyps and to introduce or withdraw fluid or air. Neither of these hurt since the lining of the colon does not have that type of pain sensation.



## **The Procedure (continued)**

Air is introduced through the scope to open up the colon so that the scope can be moved forward and to allow the endoscopist to see.

You may experience a feeling of bloating or gas cramps from the air as it distends the colon. Do not be embarrassed about releasing the air through your rectum if you can. It is important for you to let the doctor know if you are uncomfortable.

### **Polyps**

Polyps are extra growths of tissue that can range in size from the tip of a pen to several inches (doctors measure them in millimeters and centimeters).

Most polyps are benign (not cancerous) but can turn into cancers if left to grow for a very long time. As a result, they are usually removed so they can be analyzed under the microscope.

You should consult with your doctor after the examination for results of any polyps that were removed.

## **Recovering from the Colonoscopy**

After the colonoscopy, you will be kept for a short time for observation while some of the medicine wears off.

The most common discomfort after the examination is a feeling of bloating, and gas cramps. Many people tolerate it very well and feel fine afterwards.

You may also be very groggy from the sedation medications or you may have difficulty concentrating.

Some fatigue after the examination is common. You should plan to take it easy and relax the rest of the day.

You should be able to eat a regular diet after the examination. Ask your doctor when it is safe to restart your current medications.



## Possible Complications

Colonoscopy is a safe procedure and complications are rare, but they can occur:

- Bleeding can occur from biopsies or the removal of polyps, but it is usually minimal and stops quickly or can be controlled.
- The colonoscope can cause a tear or hole in the tissue being examined; but is very uncommon.
- Adverse reactions to the medications used to sedate you are possible.
- The medications can also produce irritation in the vein at the site of the intravenous line. If redness, swelling, or warmth occurs, warm to hot wet towels applied to the site may relieve the discomfort.
- If abdominal discomfort persists after you go home, notify your doctor or call the Endoscopy Recovery room (784-6212) or visit the Emergency Department.

The following symptoms should be reported immediately:

- Severe abdominal pain (not just gas cramps).
- A firm, distended abdomen.
- Vomiting.
- Fever.
- Bleeding greater than a few tablespoons.

## For More Information...

If you have questions before the day of your test, please call the office of the doctor performing your test.

If you have questions on the day of, or the day before to your test, regarding preparation or medications, please contact the Endoscopy recovery room at 784-6212.