

Getting Ready for Your Virtual Colonoscopy Non-cathartic prep

Virtual Colonoscopy

Virtual colonoscopy (VC), also referred to as CT colonography, is a less-invasive, safe exam used for colon polyp screening. The entire colon can be seen with VC. A computed tomography (CT) scan creates a 3-D picture of the inside of your colon. This helps the doctor look inside the colon without having to insert a scope.

The main purpose of this exam is to screen for growths (polyps) in the lining of the large intestine (colon and rectum). This screening should start at age 45. If you have a first-degree relative (a parent, brother, sister, or child) with colorectal cancer, your doctor may decide to start screening before age 45.

VC also allows the doctor to take a limited look outside the colon for problems in the abdomen and pelvis. This may help find problems such as abdominal aneurysms, other cancers, or conditions you may not be aware of. We may also be able to do a CT BMD (bone mineral density) exam to screen for osteoporosis. It is done at the same time as your VC exam with no extra scans or cost.

Getting Ready for Your VC Exam

Four days before the exam, avoid foods that are digested slowly (corn, popcorn, potato skins, nuts, fruits with skin or seeds, uncooked or raw vegetables, high fiber cereals) because they may interfere with the prep.

Stop taking any fiber supplements like:

- Metamucil®
- Citrucel®
- Benefiber®

Avoid anti-diarrhea medicines such as:

- Lomotil®
- Pepto-Bismol®
- Immodium®
- Loperamide

If You Have Diabetes

Call your doctor to discuss how your diabetes medicine may change before the VC. Test your blood sugar more often the day before this test. If your blood sugar level is low (less than 70 mg/dl) or if you have symptoms, take some glucose tablets or drink 4 ounces of a clear liquid that contains sugar. Always recheck your blood sugar level to make sure it stays above 70.

We can still do the VC unless you need to eat solid food to keep your blood sugar at a normal level. If the blood sugar ever gets too high or too low and you can't bring it back to normal, call your primary care or diabetes doctor.

Diverticulitis

If you get diverticulitis before your VC, call your doctor first. Then contact the VC office to reschedule your exam for at least four weeks after your treatment.

Daily Medicines

See note above if you have diabetes. You may take all other prescribed medicines before your VC including blood thinning or anti-platelet medicine. VC can safely look at your colon without stopping these medicines.

Pregnancy

If you think you may be pregnant, do not start the prep kit; you cannot have a VC exam while pregnant. If you think you could be pregnant, call the VC office. A pregnancy test will be ordered before starting the prep.

The Day Before Your Exam (Prep Day)

Starting at midnight the entire day **before** your exam (prep day), you may drink and eat as many liquids from the list below as you want unless you are on a fluid restriction by your doctor. If you are on a fluid restriction, please speak with your doctor to make sure this prep is right for you. Have items from the list below for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. **Do not eat any solid foods.** Drink plenty of fluid to avoid dehydration and make the prep work better.

- Gatorade[®], Powerade[®] (sports drinks with electrolytes are recommended to help with hydration)
- Water, tea, or coffee (milk, sugar or honey is okay to add)
- Milk, Boost[®] (not with added fiber), or Ensure[®] nutritional shakes
- Vitamin water[®], Crystal Light[®]
- Bouillon or broth (chicken, beef, or vegetable)
- Jell-O[®], Popsicles[®] (**no** fruit or cream added)
- Apple, grape, cranberry, fruit punch, or orange juice (**no** pulp)
- Soda such as Sprite[®], 7-Up[®], ginger ale, or any cola
- Clear hard candy, gum
- Lemonade (**no** pulp), iced tea
- Clear liquid protein drinks such as Ensure Clear[™], or Resource[®] Breeze

- Ice cream (**plain** with no added candy, fudge, etc.)

Follow the Bowel Prep medicine schedule.

If you wish, you may put the contents of the prep kit in the refrigerator. Or you may drink them at room temperature.

Do not store the Diatrizoate bottle where it would be in direct sunlight.

This is a non-cathartic prep meaning you will not be drinking a laxative or cathartic agent to clean your colon out.

You will likely still have looser stools related to the oral contrast. You may have some stool in your colon during the exam and this is okay.

You may have as many clear liquids as you like between each step and up until midnight but try to drink about 8 ounces of fluid every hour during the daytime.

Note: In Step 2, you choose when you would like to start the overall prep. Based on the time you choose; the remaining steps are completed in a 2-hour window. The timing does not have to be exact. Do not worry if you go beyond an hour for Steps 3 or 4.

Bowel Prep Medicine Schedule

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
WHEN	Anytime before 10 AM	Anytime between 12 and 5 PM	1 hour after Step 2	1 hour after Step 3
WHAT	Take the four Bisacodyl® tablets (5 mg each) with 1 glass (8 ounces) or more of clear liquids.	Drink 60 mL of Diatrizoate (approximately half the bottle provided in the prep kit) mixed in 8 ounces of a clear flavored beverage. Best if chilled.	Drink the entire 225 mL bottle of liquid barium sulfate suspension found in the prep kit. Best if chilled.	Drink the remaining 60 mL of Diatrizoate (second half of the bottle) mixed in 8 ounces of a clear flavored beverage. Best if chilled.
WHY	<p>Do not chew or crush the tablets.</p> <p>Do not take them within 1 hour of taking an antacid.</p> <p>This is a laxative that will gently move your bowels (6-8 hours after you take this medicine).</p>	<p>This is a contrast medicine to highlight fluid in the colon.</p> <p>This may cause loose stools in some individuals.</p>	<p>This is a contrast medicine used to highlight any leftover stool on the CT images.</p> <p>There is no lactose in the barium.</p>	<p>This is a contrast medicine to highlight fluid in the colon.</p> <p>This may cause loose stools in some individuals.</p>

Your bowel prep is done!

You may keep drinking and eating liquids from the approved list.

Morning of Exam

You may have water or clear drinks (including black coffee). You may take your daily medicines as prescribed.

You can drive yourself to and from the VC exam, as you are not given any medicine that will make you sleepy.

If you have diabetes, test your blood glucose level in the morning. You should adjust your insulin or oral diabetes pills as discussed with your doctor. Go back to your normal schedule after you finish the VC exam and are eating again.

If your blood glucose level is low (less than 70 mg/dl) or you have symptoms, please drink a clear liquid that has sugar in it or take glucose tablets. Always recheck your blood sugar level to make sure it stays above 70.

We can still do the exam unless you need to eat solid food to maintain your blood glucose.

It is better to maintain your blood glucose than to have the exam. We can always schedule your VC in the future.

During the Exam

The VC exam most often takes 30 minutes or less. Allow up to 50 minutes to change your clothes and talk with the CT technologist (tech).

You do not need pain or sedation medicine or an IV for this exam. You are asked to change into a hospital gown and then taken to a CT exam room where you lie on the CT exam table.

A small tube is gently placed a very short distance into your rectum (this feels like

having a digital rectal exam). Carbon dioxide will be placed slowly into your colon.

The exam should not be painful, though you may have some abdominal fullness, discomfort, or cramping during the exam.

You may feel the urge to have a bowel movement. These feelings should go away as soon as the exam is over.

Pictures are taken of your abdomen and pelvis while you are lying on your back and then on your stomach. You are asked to hold your breath for about 10 seconds while the CT scanner takes pictures.

After the Exam

You may resume your normal diet, go back to work or other activities after the exam.

- The full results, including if you have colon polyps, any additional findings seen outside your colon on the CT images, and CT BMD results if done, will be sent to your doctor.
- If you have UW MyChart, you will be able to view the VC report once it is final.
- If you do not have UW MyChart, you should follow up with your doctor's office to go over the results if you have not heard from them within 1-2 weeks.

Recommendations for Follow Up

No polyps found

- Repeat screening exam in 5 years.

8 to 9 mm polyp(s)

- Repeat VC exam in 3 years to monitor polyp. VC will be performed with full prep so that if polyp grows you can have same-day standard colonoscopy for removal. If no growth or smaller, may continue to monitor but at longer interval of 5 yrs.

10 mm or greater polyp(s)

- Your provider will order a standard colonoscopy to be performed at future date after complete bowel prep. At standard colonoscopy they will remove or biopsy the polyp.

Who to Call

To find out more about the virtual colonoscopy exam and prep, please see our video at uwhealth.org/vcprep

VC Program Office to speak to a nurse or team member: **608-263-9630**

If you have an urgent concern after normal business hours, contact your primary care doctors on call service. If your referring doctor is from outside the UW Health system, you may call the paging operator for urgent VC concerns at **608-263-6400** and ask for the radiology resident on-call.

If you need urgent medical help, call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room.

If you need to reschedule for any reason, call **608-263-9729**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 12/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8316.