

Getting Ready for Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

This handout will tell you how to prepare for and what to expect after your gastrointestinal procedure. **Please read at least 1 week before your procedure.** The procedure may be cancelled if you do not follow instructions.

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

A flexible sigmoidoscopy is a test to look at the lower part of your large bowel. This test can be used to find the cause of rectal bleeding or abdominal pain.

1 Week Before Procedure

Arrange for an adult to drive you home. You will not be able to drive or return to work after your procedure. You may take a cab or bus only if you have an adult who can go with you.

Health Changes

Tell us about any major health changes, illnesses, or recent hospital stays.

Blood Thinning Medicines

You may need to stop or adjust your blood thinning medicine before your procedure. Call the doctor who prescribes the medicine to discuss this or we may have to reschedule your visit.

Diabetic Medicines

You may need to stop or adjust your diabetes medicine and/or blood sugar testing while you prep. You must call the doctor who prescribes the medicine to discuss this or we may need to reschedule your visit.

Iron and Multivitamins with Iron

Stop taking 5 days before. (You do not need to contact your doctor first).

Bowel Prep

You will need to buy the bowel prep supplies before the procedure from a local drugstore. You do not need a prescription.

- MiraLax (or store brand version) – 4.1-ounce bottle
- Gatorade/PowerAde – buy two 32-ounce bottles. Do not buy red or purple colored liquids. (If you are diabetic, buy Pedialyte instead)

In some cases, the doctor may also want you to do an enema as a part of your bowel prep. **Do not buy this unless your doctor tells you to.** Some patients will have the enema here right before the procedure.

1 Day Before Procedure

You can eat a normal meal for lunch. Stop eating all solid foods by noon. After that, start a clear liquid diet.

Clear Liquid Diet Rules

- **No** creamers, milks or other dairy products
- **No** red or purple
- **No** solid food
- Drink at least 8 glasses of clear liquids all day to prevent dehydration

Clear liquids include these “see-through” items:

- Water, clear sports drinks like Gatorade[®]
- Broth
- Black coffee, tea, soda
- Apple juice
- Jell-O[®]

In the early afternoon, mix the MiraLax[®] with both bottles of chilled Gatorade. It will be 64 ounces total. If you are diabetic, use Pedialyte.

Start drinking the prep at 6 pm. Drink one 8-ounce glass of the mixture every 15 minutes until gone.

If your stool is still not clear, drink one 8-ounce glass of water every 15 minutes until your stool is clear.

Keep drinking clear liquids so you do not get dehydrated.

Day of Procedure

Follow the clear liquid diet only. No solid foods until after the procedure.

Stop drinking **all** liquids 4 hours before your procedure.

Your stools should be watery clear or yellow, with no solids (flecks of stool are OK). If you are still passing solid or brown stools, call us at **(608) 890-5010**.

What to Bring

- CPAP or BiPAP and any inhalers that you use
- Eyeglass or contact lens case, denture cup
- Ostomy supplies
- Wear comfortable clothing
- Do not bring valuables, money, or jewelry

What to Expect

Your visit will last about 2 -3 hours from the time you check in until the time you can leave.

It is up to you if your driver stays in our waiting room or in your private prep and recovery room where private health information will be discussed.

Before the procedure, the doctor will talk with you, answer questions, and ask you to sign a consent form.

A nurse will place an IV. You will get medicines to help you relax.

After your procedure, your doctor will talk with you about the results and give you a report. We strongly suggest that you have your driver wait in your private room to hear the results with you.

You may feel sleepy when you leave. Plan to spend the day resting at home. You cannot drive or return to work due to the sedation medicines. Most patients can return to their normal routine the next day.

If you have biopsies taken or polyps removed, you can expect to get lab results in 1-2 weeks, either by phone or by mail.

It may take up to a week for your bowel habits to return to your normal.

Tips for a Successful Colon Prep

- Plan on each dose taking several hours.
- Stay near a bathroom. Stock up on soft toilet paper and things to read.
- If you don't like the taste of the prep, you may add yellow lemonade Crystal Light® to the mixture. We suggest mixing it into 1 glass at a time.
- Drinking the prep through a straw may help improve the taste.
- Between glasses, you can chew gum or suck on slices of lime or lemon or hard candies (avoid red or purple candy, as these can stain your colon).
- After you mix the prep, we suggest you put it in the fridge. Take it out of the fridge at least 2 hours before you start drinking it, so you won't feel too cold.
- If you get chilled, try putting a blanket in the dryer to warm it up before using.

See website for more information such as a prep video, diet tips, and prep worksheet.
www.uwhealth.org/digestivehealth

Who to Call

Digestive Health Center
(608) 890-5010

UW Hospital GI Procedure Clinic
(608) 263-8094

Meriter/Unity Point
(608) 417-638

If you need help finding a way to get to and from your visit, contact Patient Resources at **608-821-4144**.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

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 © 11/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#6257.