PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Your Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

This information will help you get ready for your flexible sigmoidoscopy (sig-MOY-DOS-koh-pee). A flexible sigmoidoscopy is an exam of your rectum and lower colon.

During your flexible sigmoidoscopy, your healthcare provider will use a flexible tube called an endoscope to see the inside of your rectum and lower colon on a video screen. They can also take a biopsy (small tissue sample) or remove a polyp (growth of tissue) during your procedure.

1 week before your procedure

Ask about your medicines

You may need to stop taking some of your medicines before your procedure. Talk with your healthcare provider about which medicines are safe for you to stop taking. We've listed some common examples below.

Anticoagulants (blood thinners)

If you take a blood thinner (medicine that affects the way your blood clots), ask the healthcare doing your procedure what to do. Whether they recommend you stop taking the medicine depends on the type of procedure you're having and the reason you're taking a blood thinner.

Here are some examples of blood thinners. There are others, so be sure your care team knows all the medicines you take. **Do not stop taking your blood thinner without talking with a member of your care team.**

• Apixaban (Eliquis®) • Aspirin • Celecoxib (Celebrex®) • Cilostazol (Pletal®) • Clopidogrel (Plavix®) • Dabigatran (Pradaxa®) • Dalteparin (Fragmin®) • Dipyridamole (Persantine®) • Edoxaban (Savaysa®) • Enoxaparin (Lovenox®) • Fondaparinux (Arixtra®) • Heparin injection (shot)	• Meloxicam (Mobic®) • Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) and naproxen (Aleve®) • Pentoxifylline (Trental®) • Prasugrel (Effient®) • Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®) • Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine®, Sulfazine®) • Ticagrelor (Brilinta®) • Tinzaparin (Innohep®) • Warfarin (Jantoven®, Coumadin®)

Diabetes medicines

You may take insulin or other diabetes medicines. If so, talk with your MSK healthcare provider and the healthcare provider who prescribes it. Ask them what to do before your surgery or procedure. You may need to stop taking the medicine or take a different dose (amount) than usual. You may also need to follow different eating and drinking instructions before your surgery or procedure. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions.

Your care team will check your blood sugar levels during your surgery or procedure.

Here are some examples of diabetes medicines. There are others, so be sure your care team knows all the medicines you take.

- Insulin.
- Metformin, such as Glucophage® and Glumetza®.
- Medicine that contains metformin, such as Janumet®.
- SGLT-2 inhibitors, such as canagliflozin (Invokana®), dapagliflozin (Farxiga®), empagliflozin (Jardiance®), ertugliflozin (Steglatro®), bexagliflozin (Brenzavvy®), and sotagliflozin (Inpefa®).
- GLP-1 receptor agonists. Read the section "GLP-1 medicines for weight loss" for examples of GLP-1 medicines.

GLP-1 medicines for weight loss

It's important to tell your healthcare provider if you take a GLP-1 medicine. You must follow special eating and drinking instructions before your surgery or procedure. **It is very important to follow these instructions if you have taken a GLP-1 medicine at any time in the last 30 days. If you do not follow them, your surgery or procedure may be delayed or canceled.**

- **Start following a clear liquid diet at 6 a.m. the day before your surgery or procedure.** Do not eat any solid food. Read *Clear Liquid Diet* (www.mskcc.org/pe/clear-liquid-diet) to learn more.
- **Stop drinking 8 hours before your arrival time.** Do not eat or drink anything after this time, including clear liquids. You can have small sips of water with your medicines.

To learn more, read *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* (www.mskcc.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1).

Here are some examples of GLP-1 medicines. There are others, so be sure your care team knows all the medicines you take. Sometimes, these are prescribed to help manage diabetes or other conditions. Other times, they're prescribed for weight loss.

• Semaglutide (Wegovy®, Ozempic®, Rybelsus®) • Dulaglutide (Trulicity®)	• Tirzepatide (Zepbound®, Mounjaro®) • Liraglutide (Saxenda®, Victoza®)

Tell your healthcare provider if you have an AICD

Tell your MSK healthcare provider if you have an automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD).

Get a letter from your doctor, if needed

- If you have an automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD), you'll need to get a clearance letter from your cardiologist (heart doctor) before your procedure. A clearance letter is a letter that says you can safely have the procedure.
- If you've had chest pain, dizziness, trouble breathing, or have fainted in the last 6 weeks, you need to be checked by your doctor, and get a clearance letter from your doctor before your procedure.

Your MSK doctor's office must have your clearance letter at least 1 day before your procedure.

Arrange for someone to take you home

You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. A responsible care partner is someone who can help you get home safely. They should be able to contact your care team if they have any concerns. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don't have a responsible care partner to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They'll send someone to go home with you. There's a charge for this service, and you'll need to provide transportation. It's OK to use a taxi or car service, but you still need a responsible care partner with you.

Agencies in New York

VNS Health: 888-735-8913

Caring People: 877-227-4649

Agencies in New Jersey

Caring People: 877-227-4649

Buy supplies

- ☐ 1 (10 ounce) bottle of Citrate of Magnesia (magnesium citrate)
- ☐ 1 saline enema (such as Fleet® enema)
- ☐ Clear liquids
- ☐ Petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) or A & D® ointment

5 days before your procedure

Stop taking iron supplements

If you take an iron supplement or multivitamin with iron, stop taking it 5 days before your procedure. Iron supplements can cause color changes in your stool. This can make it harder for your doctor to see your colon clearly.

3 days before your procedure

An endoscopy nurse will call you between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. 3 days before your procedure. They'll review the instructions in this guide with you and ask you questions about your medical history. The nurse will also review your medicines and tell you which medicines to take the morning of your procedure.

Use the space below to write them down.

The day before your procedure



Starting the day before your procedure, do not eat anything. Follow a clear liquid diet.

Follow a clear liquid diet

A clear liquid diet includes only liquids you can see through. Examples are listed in the “Clear Liquid Diet” table. While you’re on this diet:

- Do not eat any solid foods.
- Make sure to drink plenty of liquids other than water, coffee, and tea. This helps to make sure you get enough calories and is an important part of your preparation for your procedure. Try to drink at least 1 (8 ounce) glass of liquid every hour you’re awake.
- Do not drink anything red, purple, or orange.

If you have diabetes, only drink sugar-free clear liquids and check your blood sugar level often. If you have any questions, talk with your healthcare provider.

Clear Liquid Diet		
	Drink	**Do Not Drink**
Soups	• Clear broth, bouillon, or consommé	• Any products with particles of dried food or seasoning
Sweets	• Gelatin, such as Jell-O® • Flavored ices • Hard candies, such as Life Savers®	• Anything red, purple, or orange
Drinks	• Clear fruit juices, such as apple, white cranberry, lemonade, or white grape • Soda, such as 7-Up®, Sprite®, ginger ale, or seltzer • Gatorade® • Black coffee • Tea • Water	• Juices with pulp • Nectars • Milk or cream • Alcoholic beverages • Anything red, purple, or orange

Note the time of your procedure

A staff member will call you after 12 p.m. (noon) the day before your procedure. The staff member will tell you what time you should arrive for your procedure. If you're scheduled for your procedure on a Monday, they'll call you the Friday before. If you don't get a call, call your healthcare provider's office.

If you need to cancel your procedure, call the GI scheduling office at 212-639-5020.

Take your bowel preparation

Between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., drink the 10-ounce bottle of Citrate of Magnesia. It will make you have many bowel movements and diarrhea (loose or watery bowel movements). It usually works within 30 minutes, but may take as long as 3 hours.

After your bowel preparation, you can keep drinking clear liquids until 4 hours before your scheduled arrival time.

The day of your procedure



Starting 4 hours before your scheduled arrival time, do not eat or drink anything. This includes water, hard candy, and gum.

Give yourself an enema

Start the enema 4 hours before your scheduled arrival time. This may be early in the morning. Follow the steps below.

1. Apply Vaseline or A & D ointment to the area around your anus. This prevents irritation.
2. Lie on your left side with your right knee bent in toward your chest.
3. Take the protective cap off the enema bottle. Insert the tip into your rectum.
4. Squeeze the bottle until it's empty.
5. Remove the tip from your rectum. Keep lying on your left side. Hold the liquid in your rectum until you feel the urge to move your bowels. This usually takes about 5 to 10 minutes.
6. Go to the bathroom to let the liquid out of your rectum into the toilet.

If you see any stool (poop) in the toilet, fill the enema bottle with room temperature tap water and repeat the steps above. Repeat the enema until you don't see any stool. It's okay if the liquid from the enema doesn't change color.

Things to remember

- Take only the medicines your healthcare provider told you to take the morning of your procedure. Take them with a few sips of water.
- Don't put on any lotion, cream, powder, makeup, perfume, or cologne.
- Remove any jewelry, including body piercings.
- Leave valuable objects (such as credit cards and jewelry) at home.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead.

What to bring

- ☐ A list of the medicines you take at home, including patches and creams.
- ☐ Your rescue inhaler (such as albuterol for asthma), if you have one.
- ☐ A case for your glasses.
- ☐ Your Health Care Proxy form, if you have completed one.

Where to go

Your procedure will take place at one of these locations:

- **David H. Koch Center**
  530 East 74th Street
  New York, NY 10021
  Take the elevator to the 8th floor.
- **Endoscopy Suite at Memorial Hospital (MSK's main hospital)**
  1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)
  New York, NY 10065
  Take the B elevator to the 2nd floor. Turn right and enter the Endoscopy/Surgical Day Hospital Suite through the glass doors.
- **MSK Monmouth**
  480 Red Hill Road
  Middletown, NJ 07748

Visit www.msk.org/parking for parking information and directions to all MSK locations.

What to expect

Once you arrive

Once you arrive, you'll be asked to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. This is for your safety. People with the same or similar names may be having procedures on the same day.

After changing into a hospital gown, you'll meet your nurse. They'll place an intravenous (IV) catheter into one of your veins, usually in your hand or arm.

The IV will be used to give you anesthesia (medicine to make you sleep) during your procedure. You may also get fluids through the IV before your procedure.

You'll talk with your doctor before your procedure. They'll explain the procedure and answer your questions.

During your procedure

When it's time for your procedure, you'll go into the procedure room and be helped onto an exam table. Your healthcare provider will set up equipment to monitor your heart, breathing, and blood pressure. You'll get oxygen through a thin tube that rests below your nose.

You'll get anesthesia through your IV, which will make you fall asleep. Once you're asleep, your doctor will examine your rectum, then use a flexible scope to see the inside of your rectum and the end of your colon. Your doctor will take biopsies if needed.

After your procedure

Your nurse will continue to monitor your heart, breathing, and blood pressure. Once you're fully awake, your nurse will remove your IV. Your nurse will explain your discharge instructions to you before you go home.

At home

- Don't drink alcoholic beverages for 24 hours (1 day) after your procedure.
- You might have a little bleeding during your bowel movements. This may last for up to 24 hours after your procedure.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call you healthcare provider if you have any of the following:

- A fever of 101 °F (38.3 °C) or higher
- Chest pain or shortness of breath (difficulty breathing)
- Severe pain, hardness, or swelling in your abdomen (belly)
- Bleeding from your rectum that lasts more than 24 hours
- Weakness, faintness, or both
- Any other questions or concerns

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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