



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# How to Prepare for Your Colonoscopy Using MiraLAX

This information will help you prepare for your colonoscopy using polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX®) at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

A colonoscopy is an exam of the entire colon (large intestine). Your doctor will use a flexible tube called a colonoscope to see the inside of your colon on a video monitor. During the procedure, your doctor can remove a small sample of tissue (biopsy) for testing, remove a polyp (growth of tissue), and take photos of the inside of your colon.

Follow these instructions carefully. It is very important that your colon is empty for your colonoscopy. If there is stool inside your colon, your doctor may not be able to see polyps or other problems inside your colon and you may have to repeat the procedure. If you have any questions, contact your doctor's office.

## ■ 1 Week Before Your Procedure

### Ask about your medications

You may need to stop taking or change the dose of some of your medications before your procedure. We have included some common examples below.

- If you take medication to thin your blood, such as to treat blood clots or to prevent a heart attack or stroke, ask the doctor who prescribes it for you when to stop taking it. Some examples of blood thinners are warfarin (Coumadin®), dalteparin (Fragmin®), heparin, tinzaparin (Innohep®), enoxaparin (Lovenox®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), and cilostazol (Pletal®). There are others, so check with your doctor if you are not sure.
- If you take insulin or other medications for diabetes, you may need to change the dose. Ask the doctor who prescribes your diabetes medication what you should do the day before and the morning of your procedure. Tell your doctor you will be drinking a sugar-free clear liquid diet the day before your procedure. If you take metformin or a medication that contains metformin, do not take it the day before or the day of your procedure.

### Get a letter from your doctor

- If you have an automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD), you need to get a clearance letter from your cardiologist (heart doctor) before your procedure.
- If you've had chest pain, trouble breathing that is new or worse, or have fainted in the last 6 weeks, you will need to get a clearance letter from your doctor before your procedure.
- Your MSK doctor's office must receive your clearance letter at least 1 day before your procedure.

### Arrange for someone to take you home

You must have someone 18 years or older take you home after your procedure. If you don't have anyone,

call one of the agencies below. They will provide someone to accompany you home, however there is a charge for this service and you will also need to provide transportation.

In New York:

Partners in Care (888) 735-8913

Prime Care (212) 944-0244

In New York or New Jersey:

Caring People (877) 227-4649

### **Avoid certain foods**

Starting 1 week before your colonoscopy, do not eat fresh fruits and vegetables, whole kernel corn, grains or seeds, such as poppy or sesame, or nuts. These foods are hard to digest and may make it hard for your doctor to see during your colonoscopy.

### **Purchase supplies**



Purchase the supplies you'll need to prepare for your colonoscopy. You can buy all of these over-the-counter. You do not need a prescription.

- 4 (5 mg) tablets of bisacodyl (Dulcolax®). These are usually sold as a box of 10 tablets.
- 238 grams of polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX).
- 64 ounces of any clear liquid of your choice **that is not red, purple, or orange.**

- We recommend that you get a sports drink like Gatorade® or Powerade® to replace electrolytes that you will lose with the bowel preparation. If you have diabetes, Smart Water® is a good choice because it does not contain sugar.

This is also a good time to stock up on clear liquids to drink the day before your procedure.

### **To determine whether you need any additional supplies, answer the questions below:**

- Do you tend to be constipated (have trouble passing stool)?
- Do you take narcotic (opioid) medications (such as fentanyl, morphine, hydrocodone (Vicodin®, MS Contin®), oxycodone (Oxycontin®, Percocet®)? If you're not sure, ask your healthcare provider.
- Have had a colonoscopy with a poor prep in the past?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, you must also purchase the following:

- 3 additional doses (for a total of 51 grams) of MiraLAX. You can either buy 1 additional small bottle or the packets.
- Additional liquids for a full liquid diet. Examples of what you can drink are listed under "2 Days Before Your Procedure."

## ■ 3 Days Before Your Procedure

A few days before your procedure, you will receive a telephone call from an endoscopy nurse. He or she will review the instructions in this guide with you and ask you questions about your medical history. The nurse will also review your medications and tell you which to take the morning of your procedure. Use the space below to write them down.



---

---

---

---

## ■ 2 Days Before Your Procedure

If you tend to be constipated, take narcotic (opioid) medications, or have had a colonoscopy with a poor prep in the past:

- Take 1 capful (17 grams) of MiraLAX mixed with water at breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Follow a full liquid diet:
  - Yogurt (without any pieces of fruit)
  - Fruit juices without pulp
  - Soda
  - Broth or strained cream soups
  - Nutritional supplements (such as Ensure<sup>®</sup>)
  - Ice cream and fruit ices (without any pieces of fruit)

If none of the issues above apply to you, continue to avoid fresh fruits and vegetables, whole kernel corn, grains or seeds, such as poppy or sesame, and nuts. Skip to the next section “1 Day Before Your Procedure.”

## ■ 1 Day Before Your Procedure

### Prepare your MiraLAX bowel preparation

On the morning before your procedure, pour all 238 grams of the MiraLAX powder into an empty container. Pour in 64 ounces of a room temperature clear liquid (e.g., Gatorade, Smart Water). Mix the solution until the powder is dissolved. Place the MiraLAX in the refrigerator. Many people find it tastes better chilled. Do not mix the MiraLAX earlier than the morning before your procedure.

### Follow a clear liquid diet

- Do not eat any solid food for the entire day before your procedure.
- Do not drink anything red, purple, or orange the day before your colonoscopy.
- Make sure to drink plenty of liquids other than water, coffee, and tea. Drinking enough liquids is an important part of your colonoscopy preparation. Try to drink at least 1 (8-ounce) glass every hour while you're awake.
- If you have diabetes, you should drink only 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clear fruit juices, such as white cranberry, white grape, apple</li> <li>■ Clear broth, bouillon, or consommé</li> <li>■ Water</li> <li>■ Soda</li> <li>■ Gelatin (such as Jell-o®)</li> <li>■ Flavored ices, ice pops (such as Popsicles®)</li> <li>■ Tea or black coffee (no cream)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Fruit juices with pulp</li> <li>■ Ice cream</li> <li>■ Milk</li> <li>■ Dairy and nondairy creamers</li> <li>■ Soups with noodles or vegetables</li> <li>■ Liquids you cannot see through</li> </ul>

## Time of your procedure

A clerk from the Admitting Office will call you after 11:00 am the day before your procedure. He or she will tell you what time you should arrive at the hospital for your procedure. If you are scheduled for your procedure on a Monday, you will be called on the Friday before. If you do not receive a call, please call 212-639-7882.



Write in your appointment time

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Start your bowel preparation

**At 4:00 pm on the day before your procedure**, take 2 bisacodyl tablets by mouth with a glass of water. Start drinking the MiraLAX bowel preparation. Drink 1 (8-ounce) glass of the mixture every 15 minutes for a total of 4 times until you have drunk half the MiraLAX. Save the rest of the MiraLAX in the refrigerator until the second half of your preparation.

- Bowel movements usually begin within 1 hour of drinking the first dose, however it may take longer for some people.
- If you do not start having loose stools the evening before your colonoscopy, call 212-639-2000 and ask to speak with the GI fellow on call.
- Apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) or A & D® ointment to the skin around your anus after every bowel movement. This helps prevent irritation.
- Continue to drink clear liquids to stay hydrated and flush out your colon.

**If you were told to arrive for your procedure before 11:00 am**, take 2 bisacodyl tablets and start drinking the second half of the MiraLAX solution at 11:00 pm. Drink 1 (8-ounce) glass every 15 minutes until you finish the bottle. **You can continue to drink clear liquids until 4 hours before your scheduled arrival time. Do not eat anything until after your procedure.**

## ■ The Day of Your Procedure

**If you were told to arrive for your procedure at 11:00 am or later**, take 2 bisacodyl tablets and start drinking the second half of the MiraLAX solution at 6:00 am on the day of your colonoscopy. Drink 1 (8-ounce) glass every 15 minutes until you finish the bottle. **You can continue to drink clear liquids until 4 hours before your scheduled arrival time. Do not eat anything until after your procedure.**

## **Things to remember**

- Take only the medications you were instructed to take the morning of your procedure. You may have written them down on the first page of this guide. Take them with a few sips of water.
- Do not put on any lotion, cream, powder, make-up, or perfume.
- Remove any jewelry, including body piercings.
- Leave all valuables such as credit cards and jewelry at home.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead.

## **What to bring with you**

- A list of the medications you take at home
- 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 park**

Parking at Memorial Sloan Kettering is available in the garage on East 66<sup>th</sup> Street between First and York Avenues. To reach the garage, enter East 66<sup>th</sup> Street from York Avenue. The garage is located about 1/4 block toward First Avenue, on the right (north) side of the street. A pedestrian tunnel connects the garage to the hospital. For questions about pricing, call 212-639-2338. The line for the parking garage can be long, especially in the middle of the day. You may wish to consider using one of the nearby commercial garages, which are located on East 69<sup>th</sup> Street between First and Second Avenues and on East 65<sup>th</sup> Street between First and Second Avenues.

## **Where to go**

Your procedure will take place in the Endoscopy Suite at the main hospital, which is located at 1275 York Avenue. Take the M elevator to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and enter the Endoscopy Suite through the glass doors.

If you parked in the garage on 66<sup>th</sup> Street and York Avenue, follow the signs to the A elevator. Take the A elevator to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, then follow the signs to the M building and enter the Endoscopy Suite through the glass doors.

## **What to expect**

Once you arrive at the hospital, doctors, nurses, and other staff members will ask you 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, your nurse will place an intravenous (IV) catheter into a vein, usually in your hand or arm. You'll talk with your anesthesiologist about your medical history and the anesthesia you'll get to make you sleepy. Your doctor will explain the procedure, and answer any questions you have.

When it's time for your procedure, you will be brought into the procedure room and helped onto an exam table. You will be attached to equipment to monitor your heart, breathing, and blood pressure. You will also receive oxygen through your nose. You will lay on your left side with your knees bent.

You will receive anesthesia through your IV, which will make you fall asleep. Once you are asleep, your

doctor will examine your rectum. Next, a flexible tube called a colonoscope will be put into your rectum. The colonoscope is connected to a video monitor. This allows your doctor to see the inside of your colon. Your doctor will use air and fluid to move the colonoscope along the length of your colon while looking for anything unusual on the video monitor.

## ■ **After Your Procedure**

### **In the recovery room**

You will wake up in the recovery room. Your nurse will continue to monitor your heart, breathing, and blood pressure. Many people feel bloated and have stomach cramps after a colonoscopy. This is normal and goes away by passing gas. Once you are fully awake, your nurse will remove your IV. If you have someone waiting with you, your nurse will explain your discharge instructions to both of you before you go home.

### **At home**

- If you had a biopsy, you may notice a few drops of blood coming from your rectum. This is normal after a biopsy, however there should be no more than a few drops and it should not last more than 24 hours.
- You may resume your normal activities in 24 hours after your procedure.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages for 24 hours after your procedure.
- Begin eating light foods as soon as you are discharged. Work your way up to your normal diet. If your doctor wants you to limit your diet for a period of time, he or she will tell you.

### **Call your doctor or nurse if you have:**

- A temperature of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher
- Severe stomach pain or hardness
- Bleeding from your rectum that lasts more than 24 hours
- Bleeding between bowel movements
- Weakness, faintness, or nausea
- Heavy bleeding

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at \_\_\_\_\_. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call \_\_\_\_\_. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.