

# **Guide to Preparing for Your Colonoscopy**

## One-Day Split Prep Instructions

## WellSpan Digestive Health has you scheduled for an upcoming colonoscopy

on \_\_\_\_\_ with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

### at the following facility:

#### Gettysburg:

- WellSpan Surgical Center  
236 West Street  
Gettysburg, PA 17325
- Gettysburg Hospital  
147 Gettys Street  
Gettysburg, PA 17325

#### Hanover:

- WellSpan Health and  
Surgical Center  
1227 Baltimore Street  
Hanover, PA 17331

#### Lebanon:

- Good Samaritan Outpatient Surgery Center  
830 Tuck Street  
Lebanon, PA 17042
- Good Samaritan Hospital  
252 South 4th Street  
Lebanon, PA 17042

#### York:

- Apple Hill Surgical Center  
25 Monument Road,  
Suite 270  
York, PA 17403
- York Hospital GI Lab  
1001 South George Street, Fourth Floor  
York, PA 17403
- York Hospital OR  
1001 South George Street  
York, PA 17403

**It is very important that you read  
this packet several days prior to your procedure.**

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**You will be contacted within 48 hours prior to your procedure  
with an arrival time. Please have a pen and paper ready.**

**At any time should you need to reschedule your  
procedure or have questions regarding this packet,  
please contact WellSpan Digestive Health at  
(717) 812-5120.**

## Welcome.

Thank you for choosing WellSpan Digestive Health and entrusting us with your digestive health needs. Our doctors and staff members are committed to providing you with quality health care. With compassion and dedication, we will work alongside you and your family members to support good digestive health and wellness.

This booklet was designed to help you prepare for your colonoscopy. We hope the enclosed information answers questions you may have about your colonoscopy and helps you prepare for your procedure. Our goal is to provide you with excellent care and to do so requires your participation. Proper cleansing of your colon is essential for a thorough examination. If you carefully follow the colonoscopy prep instructions your colon will be properly cleaned out.

We congratulate you on scheduling your colonoscopy and look forward to partnering with you for better health.

A clean colon happens to be the most important part of a successful colonoscopy.

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# Lower Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (Colonoscopy)

At WellSpan Digestive Health in York, it is important to us that you understand why you need a colonoscopy, what is involved, and the related risks. This packet was developed to help you understand and walk you step-by-step through the process of having a successful procedure.

## What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy lets the doctor look inside your entire large intestine, from the lowest part (rectum), all the way up through the colon to the lower end of the small intestine. The procedure is used to look for early signs of cancer in the colon and rectum. It is also used to diagnose the causes of unexplained changes in bowel habits. A colonoscopy enables the doctor to see inflamed tissue, abnormal growths, ulcers and bleeding.

During the exam, a doctor will insert a thin and flexible tube into the rectum. A tiny video camera at the tip of the tube allows the doctor to view the inside of the entire colon. During the exam, the doctor may take tissue samples called biopsies and remove abnormal tissue such as polyps.

## Are there other options to a colonoscopy?

Other screening tests for colon cancer include stool testing, a limited scope exam without sedation called a flexible sigmoidoscopy, and barium enema x-ray. All of these have been shown to prevent some cases of colon cancer, but they are far less reliable than a colonoscopy. If they do detect a problem, in all cases, you will need a colonoscopy to confirm the results.

## What are the risks of a colonoscopy:

- Injury to the lining of the digestive tract by the instrument, which may result in a perforation (tear) of the wall; if this occurs, surgical operation to close the tear is often necessary.
- Bleeding, if it occurs, is usually a complication of biopsy, polyp removal, or dilation; treatment may consist of only careful observation but may require blood transfusion or possibly surgical operation for control.
- Other risks include, but are not limited to, respiratory problems, decrease in blood pressure, allergic reaction, slurred speech, unaroused sleep, impaired cardiovascular function, aspiration and pneumonia, heart attack, clotting or infection in the vein where medication is given, breathing fluids into the lungs, and very rarely death.
- As with any diagnostic test there is a risk of missing or misidentifying a lesion. This can result from poor preparation, inability to complete the exam, difficult anatomy or other reasons.

All the above complications are possible but occur with a very low frequency. Occasionally one or more of these complications could result in further hospitalization, blood transfusion, or the need for surgical procedures for their correction. Your physician will discuss this and answer any questions with you prior to your procedure.

# Colonoscopy Split Preparation Directions

To have a successful colonoscopy, your colon must be clear of all stool. This allows your doctor to clearly view the entire colon. **If you do not follow these instructions, your exam may need to be rescheduled or repeated.**

**Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact WellSpan Digestive Health in York at (717) 812-5120.**

## Items Needed:

- 1 bottle - 8.3 ounces (238 grams) of Polyethylene glycol (PEG) 3350 laxative such as Miralax or Equate Clearlax.
- 1 bottle – 64-ounce Gatorade or G2 or Propel or Powerade Zero. Any flavor **except** those colored **red, orange, or purple**. You may substitute an equal quantity of Crystal Light drink mix or other non-carbonated clear liquid. G2 is a Gatorade product with less sugar.
- 2-quart container in which to mix the prep.
- 2 Bisacodyl laxative (5mg) tablets (Dulcolax or another brand). Do not purchase suppositories or stool softener.
- **Please refer to the Shopping List Document for additional helpful items.**

## Ten (10) Days Before Your Procedure:

- Purchase the prep supplies listed above. These items are over-the-counter and do not require a prescription.
- Review the instructions below for information regarding when to begin and how to take your bowel prep. **If you have any questions or need to cancel/reschedule your procedure, please contact WellSpan Digestive Health in York at (717) 812-5120.**
- Review and plan a low-fiber and clear-liquid diet that will help you prepare for your procedure.

## Seven (7) Days Before Your Procedure:

- Stop taking iron; all vitamins; all herbal and fiber supplements.
- Confirm arrangements with your driver who will take you to and from your procedure appointment.
- **If you have any questions or need to cancel/reschedule your procedure, please contact the office at (717) 812-5120.**

## Three (3) Days Before Your Procedure:

- Start eating a low-fiber diet. Please refer to the Low Fiber Diet Document.
- Stop eating foods with seeds (such as peas, beans, okra, tomatoes, corn, popcorn) or nuts.
- These foods may stick to the colon walls and may not flush out with the bowel prep.

# Colonoscopy Split Preparation Directions *continued*

## Two (2) Days Before Your Procedure:

- Continue eating a low-fiber diet.

 **At midnight, stop eating solid foods until after your procedure.**

## One (1) Days Before Your Procedure:

- **No solid foods allowed.**
- Drink only clear liquids. **Please refer to the Clear Liquid Diet Document.**
- Be sure to drink an extra 12 glasses (8-10 ounces each) of clear liquids throughout the day to stay hydrated.

### At 4:00 pm:

1. Take two (2) laxative tablets with a glass of water.
2. Prepare the prep mixture by pouring the 8.3-ounces bottle of powder into a 2-quart container.
3. Add the Gatorade (or the substituted non-carbonated clear liquid).
4. Stir until dissolved.
5. Place in refrigerator.

### At 6:00 pm:

1. Drink an 8-ounce glass of the prep mixture.
2. Continue to drink an 8-ounce glass of the prep mixture every 15 minutes **until half the mixture is gone (4 glasses over 1 hour).**
3. Place the remaining prep mixture (that you will drink tomorrow morning) into the refrigerator.

The prep mixture will cause multiple bowel movements and often starts working within 30 minutes but may take as long as 3 hours. **Please remain close to your bathroom once you start drinking.**

**Continue to drink only clear liquids for the rest of the day.**

## The Day of Your Procedure:

**Do not eat solid foods until after your procedure.**

**Six (6) hours before your scheduled arrival time, drink the remaining prep mixture.** Drink an 8-ounce glass of the prep mixture every 15 minutes until you finish the mixture (4 glass over 1 hour).

 **Four (4) hours before your scheduled arrival time, do not have anything to eat or drink including water, gum, hard candy, and chewing tobacco.**

You may brush your teeth the morning of the procedure, being careful not to swallow any liquids.

## A Few Reminders Before Leaving Home

- For your safety, no matter what form of transport you are using, someone must accompany you home after the procedure. This is a must! Not negotiable!
- Your driver must stay at the facility during your procedure.
- Bring a list of your current medications and allergies with you.
- Bring your insurance cards and driver's license/ picture ID with you.
- You may wear your dentures, hearing aids and glasses. If you wear contacts, please bring their case with you as you will need to remove them in preop.
- Please leave all jewelry at home.

# Quick Guide •

## Colonoscopy Split Preparation Directions

### The Day Before Your Procedure – Start clear liquid diet

- ✓  **STOP! No solid foods until after procedure.**
- ✓  **4:00 p.m.** – Take 2 bisocodyl or Dulcolax laxative tablets.
- ✓  **Pour the entire 8.3-ounce bottle of prep powder into a 2-quart container.** Add the Gatorade and stir until well dissolved. Place in fridge.
- ✓  **6:00 p.m.** – Drink an 8-ounce glass of prep mixture every 15 minutes until half the mixture is left (4 glasses within 1 hour).  
Glass 1 at 6:00 pm: Drink an 8-ounce glass of the prep mixture.  
Glass 2 at 6:15 pm: Drink an 8-ounce glass of the prep mixture.  
Glass 3 at 6:30 pm: Drink an 8-ounce glass of the prep mixture.  
Glass 4 at 6:45 pm: Drink an 8-ounce glass of the prep mixture
- ✓  **Continue to only drink clear liquids until you go to bed**
- ✓  **Continue to only drink clear liquids until you go to bed**

### The Morning of Your Procedure

- ✓  **STOP! No solid foods until after procedure.**
- ✓  **Six (6) hours before your arrival time,** drink an 8-ounce glass of the prep mixture every 15 minutes **until the mixture is gone. Total of 4 glasses in 1 hour.**
- ✓  **Four (4) hours before your arrival time, do not have anything to eat or drink including water, gum, hard candy, and chewing tobacco.**

(717) 812-5120  
WellSpan.org/DigestiveHealth



**TEAR THIS PAGE OUT AND  
HANG OTHER SIDE ON YOUR  
REFRIGERATOR OR CABINET  
AS A QUICK REFERENCE  
GUIDE**

# Medications

**For your safety, it is important that you follow the instructions that you are given about all medications. If at any time you have questions regarding what medications to take and how to take them, please contact the office at (717) 812-5120.**

Most medications can be continued as usual if you are getting a colonoscopy, but some medications can interfere with the preparation or the examination.

If you are taking baby aspirin **for preventative measures only**, please stop 5 days before your procedure day. Please continue (don't stop) taking aspirin if you are on them for the following reason(s):

- Stent placement
- Heart attack
- Heart disease
- Heart rhythm problems
- Surgery to improve blood flow to your legs
- Stroke

If you are on Coumadin (Warfarin), Plavix or insulin to treat diabetes, you will receive detailed instructions on how to take this medication prior to your procedure. If you have not received this information a week before your procedure, please contact the office at (717) 812-5120.

You may continue to take all medications up to and including the morning of your procedure (with a little sip of water) except:

- Blood thinners
- Coumadin
- Carafate
- Metformin
- Exelon Patch

# Colonoscopy Split Prep

7 Days Before Procedure	3 Days Before Procedure	2 Days Before Procedure
Date:	Date:	Date:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review your prep instructions carefully. <b>If for any reason you need to cancel or reschedule your procedure, please call the office at (717) 812-5120.</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stop taking:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iron</li> <li>• All vitamins</li> <li>• All supplements (fiber and herbal)</li> <li>• Fiber supplements (such as Metamucil; Citrucel; Fibercon; BeneFiber)</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm plans with your driver to take you to and from your procedure appointment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make sure you have all your prep supplies <b>(Please see Grocery List – Required Items).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review and plan dietary needs for next 3 days.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> BEGIN: Low fiber diet <b>(Please see Low Fiber Diet Document).</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> STOP EATING:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popcorn</li> <li>• Corn</li> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Nuts / Seeds</li> <li>• Fruits with skin or seeds</li> <li>• Tomatoes</li> <li>• Okra</li> <li>• Celery</li> <li>• Salads</li> <li>• Potato Skins</li> <li>• Raw/Uncooked Vegetables</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue low fiber diet.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>At midnight, stop eating solid foods until after your procedure.</b></li> </ul>

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**(717) 812-5120**

**WellSpan.org/DigestiveHealth**

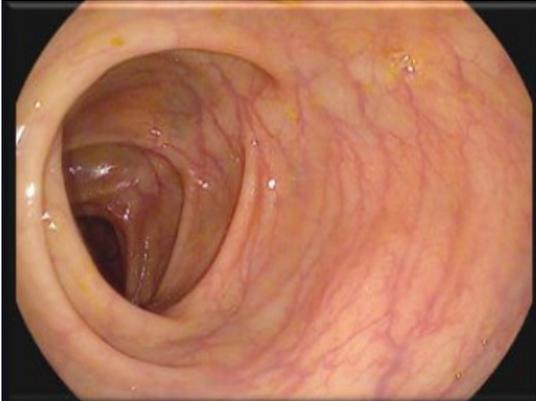
# Calendar Plan

1 Day Before Procedure	Day of Procedure	After Procedure
Date:	Date:	Date:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>No solid foods allowed.</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Start clear liquid diet <b>(Please see Clear Liquid Diet Document).</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be sure to drink an extra 12 glasses (8-10 ounces each) of clear liquids throughout the day.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>At 4:00 PM</b>, take 2 Bisacodyl tablets. Mix and chill the prep mixture (Please see Colonoscopy Split Preparation Directions Document).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>At 6:00 PM</b>, start drinking the prep mixture. Continue to drink one glass <b>every 10-15 minutes until half the mixture is left.</b> (4 glasses over 1 hour). It is normal to experience bloating, nausea and abdominal discomfort. If this happens, slow down or stop drinking mixture for 30 minutes, and then restart drinking.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Continue clear liquids until you go to bed.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>6 hours before your procedure time</b>, begin drinking the remaining prep mixture. Continue drinking 1 glass <b>every 10-15 minutes until the entire mixture is gone</b> (4 glasses over 1 hour).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>4 hours before your procedure time, do not have anything by mouth (including water, gum, hard candy, and chewing tobacco).</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wear loose comfortable clothes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Only light make-up should be worn; NO perfume or cologne.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leave jewelry and valuables at home.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bring your eyeglass case, contact lens container and denture cup, if you have any of these.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow Discharge Instructions given to you at time of discharge.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Resume a regular diet as tolerated.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan to rest.</li> </ul> <p>Due to the anesthetic being in your system for 24 hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not make any important decisions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not drive.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not use dangerous machinery.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not drink alcohol.</li> </ul>

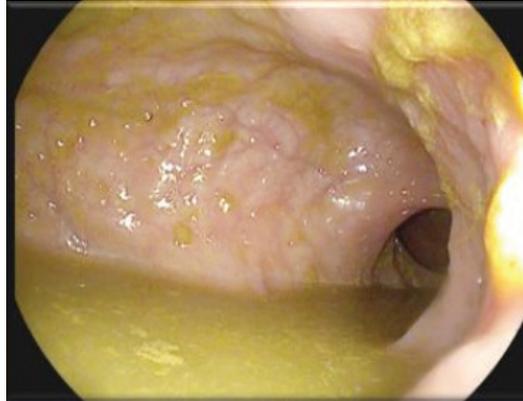


## Color Of Stool Indicating A Successful Colon Preparation

To have a successful colonoscopy, your colon must be clear of any stool (see clean colon picture below). This allows your doctor to see your entire colon. Completing the entire preparation increases the chance of a clean colon.



**CLEAN COLON: Can see polyps**



**DIRTY COLON: Cannot see polyps**



DARK  
AND MURKY.  
**NOT OK**

BROWN  
AND MURKY.  
**NOT OK**

DARK ORANGE  
AND SEMI-CLEAR.  
**NOT OK**

LIGHT ORANGE AND  
MOSTLY CLEAR.  
**ALMOST THERE!**

YELLOW AND CLEAR,  
LIKE URINE.  
**YOU'RE READY!**

After finishing the prep mixture, your bowel movements should be all liquid, yellow and clear (with no dark particles).

## Helpful Hints

- The prep powder will dissolve better if you add it to Gatorade that is room temperature. After you mix together, chill in refrigerator before drinking.
- Drink the prep mixture through a straw and place the straw towards the back of your tongue.
- Try drinking 1 cup of ginger ale before you start your prep to settle your stomach; you can also have ginger ale in between prep drinks.
- Once the prep starts working (which is different for each patient) you will have frequent loose, watery stools, which can be quite sudden. **Stay close to a toilet.**
- Your bowel movements will be affected by the Gatorade color. If you drink green Gatorade, your stool may be green. If you drink blue Gatorade, your stool may be blue.
- It is not uncommon to have bloating, nausea, abdominal cramps and/or chills that should decrease over the course of the bowel preparation. A warm blanket may provide comfort and relief.
- You may experience skin irritation around the anus or hemorrhoidal inflammation due to the passing of frequent liquid stools. To prevent and treat skin irritations, you could:
  - Wipe the skin after each bowel movement with disposable wet wipes (non-alcoholic) instead of toilet paper. These are found in the toilet paper area of stores.
  - Apply Vaseline or A&D ointment to the skin around the anus before drinking the bowel preparation medications and after each bowel movement. These products can be purchased at any drug store.
  - Sit in a bathtub filled with warm water for 10 to 15 minutes after you finish passing stool. You may add 1 cup of Epsom salt to your bath water. After soaking, blot the skin dry with a soft cloth. Then apply Vaseline or A&D ointment to the anal area.

## Low Fiber Diet Information

Food Group	Foods Allowed	Foods to Avoid
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned or cooked fruit without skins or seeds (peaches, pears, apricots, apples)</li> <li>• Applesauce</li> <li>• Ripe banana</li> <li>• Jellied cranberry sauce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raw fruit (bananas are ok)</li> <li>• All berries and melons</li> <li>• Canned pineapple; oranges; grapefruit sections; mixed fruit</li> <li>• Dried fruit</li> <li>• All berries, melons</li> <li>• Whole cranberry sauce</li> <li>• Avocado</li> <li>• Coconut</li> </ul>
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tender, well-cooked fresh, canned, and frozen vegetables without seeds (peeled carrots, green beans, and beans)</li> <li>• Strained vegetable juice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All raw vegetables, such as lettuce, onion, celery, cucumber, mushrooms, scallions, etc.</li> <li>• Vegetables with seeds</li> <li>• Vegetables with shells such as beans, peas, corn and lentils</li> <li>• Tough, fibrous cooked vegetables such as cabbage and brussels sprouts</li> </ul>
Meat and meat substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooked, tender and skinless chicken and turkey</li> <li>• Fish and other seafoods</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Cheese</li> <li>• Tofu</li> <li>• Smooth peanut butter and other smooth nut butters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tough (non-tender) meats</li> <li>• Meat with skin</li> <li>• Gristle</li> <li>• Hot dogs</li> <li>• Salami, cold cuts</li> <li>• Crunchy peanut butter and other crunchy nut butters</li> </ul>

Food Group	Foods Allowed	Foods to Avoid
Breads, cereals and starches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refined breads, rolls, bagels, English muffins, pita bread, biscuits, muffins, crackers, pancakes, waffles and pastries.</li> <li>• White rice or noodles</li> <li>• Potato rolls</li> <li>• Skinless cooked potato and sweet potato</li> <li>• Vanilla wafers</li> <li>• Animal crackers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole wheat (grain) breads, cereals and pasta</li> <li>• Corn bread and pumpernickel bread</li> <li>• Any bread, cereal, cracker or pasta made with seeds, nuts, coconut or raw/dried fruit</li> <li>• Oatmeal</li> <li>• Granola</li> <li>• Graham crackers</li> <li>• Brown or wild rice</li> <li>• Wheat germ</li> <li>• Bran</li> <li>• Sprouted wheat</li> <li>• Barley</li> <li>• Potato skins</li> <li>• Beans and lentils</li> </ul>
Milk and dairy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cow's milk</li> <li>• Ice cream</li> <li>• Yogurt</li> <li>• Cheese</li> <li>• Cream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruited yogurt</li> <li>• Any ice cream or cheese with nuts or seeds</li> <li>• Any milk products if you are lactose intolerant</li> </ul>
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salt, ground or flaked herbs and spices</li> <li>• Vinegar</li> <li>• Ketchup and mustard</li> <li>• Soy sauce</li> <li>• Jelly, but not jam or preserves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pepper</li> <li>• Seed spices</li> <li>• Seeds and nuts</li> <li>• Popcorn</li> <li>• Jam or preserves</li> <li>• Pickles and olives</li> </ul>
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee and tea</li> <li>• Soda</li> <li>• Apple and tomato juice</li> <li>• Strained juice</li> <li>• Fruit drinks without pulp such as fruit punch</li> <li>• Kool-Aid or Hi-C (No red orange or purple)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any beverage containing pulp or seeds, such as orange or grapefruit juice</li> <li>• Nutritional supplements that contain fiber</li> </ul>

# Clear Liquid Diet Information

Food Group	Foods Allowed	Foods to Avoid
Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear broth or bouillon</li> <li>• Chicken broth</li> <li>• Vegetable broth</li> <li>• Beef broth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any products with particles of dried food or seasonings</li> <li>• Any product with noodles or vegetables</li> <li>• Tomato soup</li> </ul>
Sweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ice popsicles (<b>nothing red, orange or purple</b>)</li> <li>• Italian/Fruit Ice (<b>nothing red, orange or purple</b>)</li> <li>• Plain Jell-O (<b>nothing red, orange or purple</b>)</li> <li>• Honey</li> <li>• Sugar</li> <li>• Sorbet (<b>nothing red, orange or purple</b>)</li> <li>• Hard candies (<b>nothing red, orange or purple</b>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others</li> </ul>
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tea and Coffee (without cream or milk)</li> <li>• Sports drinks, such as Gatorade; Powerade; Propel (<b>nothing red, orange or purple</b>)</li> <li>• Soda</li> <li>• White cranberry juice</li> <li>• White grape juice</li> <li>• Apple Juice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juices with pulp</li> <li>• Nectars</li> <li>• Milk or cream</li> <li>• Milkshakes or smoothies</li> <li>• Beer and alcoholic beverages</li> <li>• Tomato, grapefruit and orange juices</li> </ul>

## Store Shopping List – Required Items

Important: If you have any questions regarding the below items, please take this paper to your local store and go to the pharmacy section. All items are over-the-counter, and the pharmacy staff may assist you.

- ❑ One (1) bottle of Miralax powder 8.3 ounces (235.3 grams) **or** Clearlax (generic)



**OR**



- ❑ Dulcolax 5 mg tablets (no suppositories) **or** Bisacodyl (generic)

- You will be taking 2 of them



**OR**



- ❑ 64-ounce bottle of the following (Do not use any **red**, **orange** or **purple** colored drink):

- Gatorade
- Gatorade G2 (low-calorie, low sugar)
- Powerade Zero
- Smart Water



# Optional Items – Store Checklist

## Items People Find Helpful:

- Straws
- Hard Candy
- Reading Material
- Word Games
- Skin-soothing products such as Vaseline; A&D ointment; Hemorrhoidal Cream
- Toilet Paper (soft with aloe)
- Baby wipes (non-alcoholic)
- Ginger ale
- Plain Jell-O (no **red**, **orange** or **purple** colored)

Others: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q.** Is there any way I can make this taste better?

**A.** You can try drinking the prep mixture through a straw. Between glasses, try chewing gum, sucking on hard candy, or rinsing your mouth with water, mouthwash or any other beverage listed on the Clear Liquid Diet.

**Q.** Why should I avoid red, orange and purple liquids?

**A.** These colors can stay in the colon and potentially look like blood.

**Q.** Is the Prep mixture the only liquid I need to drink prior to the procedure?

**A.** No, please drink an additional 12 glasses (8 – 10 ounces each) of liquids so you do not become dehydrated. The colon prep mixture is to clean out the colon; not to replace fluid loss.

**Q.** Is it OK to drink alcoholic beverages?

**A.** We strongly suggest you do not drink any alcoholic beverages prior to your procedure since they can cause dehydration, and some wines may thin your blood.

**Q.** I already have diarrhea before taking the prep, do I still have to drink all the prep mixture?

**A.** Yes, you must take the prep as directed by your doctor. While you may be going frequently, it is important that what you see in the toilet is clear. If the colon is not completely cleaned, the procedure may be cancelled and rescheduled, so it is important to take the entire prep.

**Q.** I am taking the prep and now have loose, watery stools. Do I really have to drink all the prep mixture?

**A.** Yes, you do! You want your colon to be as clean as possible so that your doctor may fully see your colon. This makes a big difference in the quality of the colonoscopy.

**Q.** I am taking the prep and now have loose, watery stools. Do I really have to drink all the prep mixture?

**A.** Yes, you do! You want your colon to be as clean as possible so that your doctor may fully see your colon. This makes a big difference in the quality of the colonoscopy.

**Q.** I feel like vomiting and don't think I can drink any more. What should I do?

**A.** People may have nausea and even vomit while prepping for the colonoscopy. The volume of the preparation cannot be reduced. Without a clean bowel, the doctor will not be able to see the inside of your colon to complete the examination. Walking and other activities usually decrease nausea. If you do vomit or feel nauseated, do not drink any of the prep mixture for approximately 30 minutes, then resume at the usual rate. Keep at it. It may be hard - but you can do it.

**Q.** I drank most of the prep mixture and have not gone to the bathroom yet. What should I do?

**A.** Some people have a bowel movement after 30 minutes while others may take longer. If you feel bloated or nauseated, do not drink any of the prep mixture for 30-45 minutes, then resume at the usual rate. If you still have not had a bowel movement after 4 hours of drinking the mixture, please call the office for further instructions.

**Q.** I see yellow color in the toilet bowl and a few flecks. What do I do?

**A.** If you drank the entire prep mixture, you should be fine. It is OK if you have some flecks of material. The yellow color is the result of bile that normally colors the stool. This shouldn't interfere with the examination.

**Q.** Can I have the colonoscopy if I am on my period?

**A.** Yes, the procedure can still be performed.

# What to Expect Day of Procedure

## Arriving at the Facility:

- When you arrive, please register at the receptionist desk.
- You will complete registration paperwork and financial consent forms.
- A nurse will come to the waiting room area to walk you to the Pre-Operative area. (Your driver will be allowed to wait with you until your procedure.)

## Pre-Operative Area

- You will have a private area where you can change into a gown that will completely cover you. Warm blankets will be provided.
- Bathrooms are available.
- A nurse will get your vital signs and insert an intravenous (IV) line into a vein (typically a vein in your hand). The IV allows you to receive medications and fluids for the procedure.
- You will meet a member of the anesthesia team and the gastroenterologist performing your procedure. They will discuss the risks, benefits and side effects of anesthesia and the procedure. Any questions or concerns you have will be discussed.
- A member of your care team will take you to the procedural room.

## Procedural Room:

- You will be asked to lay on your left side with your knees bent.
- You will receive medicine into the IV line that will make you sleep.
- Your heart rate, blood pressure and breathing will be watched.
- The gastroenterologist will insert a colonoscope into your anus and slowly guide it through your colon. The doctor will carefully examine the lining of the colon. The scope will blow air into your colon to inflate it. This will help the doctor see the walls of your colon.
- A colonoscopy may take longer for some patients than for others. As a result, your exam may not be performed at the exact time you were scheduled. We ask for your patience and understanding.
- When the procedure is finished, you will be taken to the Recovery Area.

## Recovery Area:

- Nursing staff will care for you until you are awake and comfortable (30 – 60 minutes). Some patients may experience mild bloating and stomach cramps. This is normal!
- All patients should pass gas and not feel embarrassed. This will relieve any feelings of bloating and cramping. These symptoms may gradually disappear as time goes on.
- After the effects of anesthesia have lessened, you will change back into the clothes you wore to the facility.
- Your doctor will come to the Recovery Area and briefly review your procedure results. If a biopsy was taken or polyp(s) removed, your doctor will discuss how you will receive the results.
- Discharge instructions will be given on follow-up care along with contact phone numbers to call if you have questions or concerns after discharge. Your driver will join you in the Recovery Area when these instructions are given.
- After signing Discharge Instructions, your driver will be asked to bring the car to the discharge area. A nurse will walk you to your vehicle.

## Arriving Home After Procedure:

- Plan to take it easy and relax the rest of the day. It is normal to feel tired afterwards.
- Because of the anesthesia, you may not drive, use power equipment, eat a heavy meal, sign important papers, make any important decisions or stay by yourself until the day after the procedure.
- Don't drink alcoholic beverages for 24 hours after your procedure.
- You can resume your usual activities the next day.

### **Call WellSpan Digestive Health in York immediately at (717) 812-5120 if you experience:**

- Extreme abdominal pain (not just gas cramps)
- A firm, bloated abdomen
- Uncontrollable nausea and vomiting
- Fever
- Rectal bleeding

WellSpan Digestive Health  
2350 Freedom Way  
Suite 200  
York, PA 17402  
(717) 812-5120

1227 Baltimore St.  
Hanover, PA 17331  
(717) 812-5130



[WellSpan.org/DigestiveHealth](http://WellSpan.org/DigestiveHealth)