

Information Booklet "Before Your Colonoscopy":
<https://vch.eduhealth.ca/en/permalink/phem3455>
Also available in Chinese Traditional/Simplified,
Farsi, Punjabi, Tagalog

DR. RACHEL LIU HENNESSEY, MD, MSC, FRCSC
General Surgery

MSP: 59167

5th Floor, 2775 Laurel Street, Reception 2E

Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1M9

Phone: 604-875-5790 | Fax: 604-875-5781 | clinic@hnsy.ca | DrLH.ca

Bowel Preparation Instructions for Colonoscopy or Gastroscopy + Colonoscopy

Appointment Date: _____

Procedure Time: _____ **Must arrive ONE HOUR PRIOR**

Location: UBC Hospital

Koerner Pavilion (Ground Floor)
2211 Wesbrook Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3
Phone: 604-822-7665

OR

Vancouver General Hospital

Jim Pattison Pavilion (1st Floor)
899 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9
Phone: 604-875-4155

Bowel Preparation to Purchase from the Drugstore:

- **CoLyte 4L or PegLyte (Polyethylene Glycol 3350 + Electrolytes)**
→ 4 litres of fluids

One Week Prior to the Procedure:

- Stop taking iron supplements.
- **Blood thinners:** stop taking _____ medication
_____ day(s) before the appointment.
- **AVOID whole grain bread, granola, seeds, nuts, corn, or foods containing these ingredients.**
- **OK TO EAT** white bread, white rice, pasta, low-fiber cereal, and creamy peanut/almond butter.
- Purchase bowel preparation above, **no prescription required**. You may wish to call the pharmacy ahead of your visit to ensure it is in stock.

One Day Prior to the Procedure:

- **Take your bowel preparation** as directed on the next page along with plenty of clear fluids.
- Drink **clear fluids only** until the procedure. Examples include water, juice (no pulp), sports drinks, pop, consommé soups, clear tea, black coffee, jello, popsicles.
- **Avoid all solid foods, dairy products, and alcohol. Avoid red, blue, or purple coloured liquids.**
- Stay close to the toilet as you will have diarrhea.

Day of the Procedure:

- Arrive on time with BC Care/Services Card.
- Leave your valuables at home. Bring a reusable bag or backpack to store your belongings during the procedure.
- Have an adult with you who can escort you home afterwards. If you are planning to take a taxi home, **you must arrange a responsible adult to accompany you** during the ride.

After the Procedure:

- **YOU SHOULD NOT DRIVE OR OPERATE MACHINERY** for at least **24 hours** after the procedure.



Bowel Preparation Directions – CoLyte 4L or PegLyte

For procedures booked in the <u>MORNING</u>	For procedures booked in the <u>AFTERNOON</u>
<p>One day prior to the procedure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> At 6:00 a.m. – Drink 2L (8 cups) of bowel preparation within 2 hours. Continue drinking lots of clear fluids throughout the day. At 4:00 p.m. – Drink the remaining 2L (8 cups) of bowel preparation. Continue drinking lots of clear fluids until bedtime. <p>On the day of procedure: Do not eat or drink anything within 4 hours before the procedure, with the exception of sips of water for medication. If you have issues with low blood sugar, you may drink some clear juice.</p>	<p>One day prior to the procedure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> At 10:00 a.m. – Drink 2L (8 cups) of bowel preparation within 2 hours. Continue drinking lots of clear fluids throughout the day until bedtime. <p>On the day of procedure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> At 6:00 a.m. – Drink the remaining 2L (8 cups) of bowel preparation within 120 minutes (2 hours). <p>Do not eat or drink anything within 4 hours before the procedure, with the exception of sips of water for medication. If you have issues with low blood sugar, you may drink some clear juice.</p>

About Bowel Preparation:

Bowel preparation medication triggers bowel clearing diarrhea. A person can lose three to four litres of fluid a day, so it is very important to drink lots of fluid the day prior to your colonoscopy to stay hydrated. Dehydration is not pleasant and can cause weakness, dizziness, headache and fatigue. The medication will start working in one to three hours for most people. If you have a sensitive system, it could work much sooner. Make sure you do not leave your home once you have taken the medication! The medication also makes your bowel very active, so your stool will be more acidic. Consider using baby wipes instead of toilet paper, having a few shallow baths, and applying Vaseline or zinc ointment. Other notes:

- Drinking only water can cause electrolyte issues which can lead to heart problems or seizures.
- Watch for possible side effects including nausea, vomiting, abdominal bloating, and light-headedness.
- Get medical attention if you experience ongoing vomiting, severe stomach pain, bloody bowel movements, chest pain, or fainting.
- Please be prepared! Your colonoscopy may be cancelled or may need to be repeated if all of the instructions provided to you are not followed.

Colonoscopy Procedure & Potential Risks

A **colonoscopy** is a procedure that allows a doctor to examine the inside of the large intestine (colon) using a flexible tube with a camera. It is commonly performed to screen for colorectal cancer, investigate symptoms like bleeding or changes in bowel habits, and remove polyps. The procedure typically takes about 30 minutes and is done under sedation for comfort.

While generally safe, potential complications include:

- **Abdominal discomfort or bloating** (temporary and common, affecting many patients but usually resolving within hours)
- **Bleeding** (especially if a biopsy or polyp removal is performed) – occurs in about 1 in 400 cases, though usually minor and self-limited
- **Perforation** (a tear in the colon wall, which may require surgery) – occurs in approximately 1 in 2,000 to 1 in 3,000 cases
- **Adverse reactions to sedation** (such as breathing or heart problems) – very rare, occurring in about 1 in 10,000 cases
- **Missed polyps** – depending on the quality of the bowel preparation, very small and generally inconsequential polyps may be missed in 1/1000 cases

Most patients recover quickly and can resume normal activities the same day.