You are scheduled for a colonoscopy, an examination of the colon (large intestine) with a lighted flexible scope. Plan to be with us for a total of two to three hours. When you arrive, you will need to complete your paperwork and then change into a patient gown. The nursing staff will perform a brief assessment, place an IV, and take you into the procedure room where you will be sedated and undergo the colonoscopy. The colonoscopy itself takes about 15-30 minutes.

After the colonoscopy, you will rest in the recovery area while the sedative wears off. Due to the sedation, you may not remember your conversation with the doctor after the colonoscopy. It is helpful to have a family member or friend with you that can hear the results. By law, you cannot drive the rest of the day of the colonoscopy. We advise you to take the entire day off work.

A thorough cleansing of the colon is essential and the examination is most successful if you follow the directions for preparation completely, as outlined below. If you have any questions about the test or preparation, please do not hesitate to call our office. If you had this procedure before, you may have taken Fleets Phospho Soda. We have switched to the following prep because it seems better for our patients.

It is important for you to bring a list of all prescription medications and non-prescription products (over-the-counter, anti-inflammatory, herbal, vitamins, etc) you are taking and a list of any medication allergies.

**Purchase These Items Ahead of Time:**
1. Two Dulcolax tablets (over the counter)
2. One 238-gram bottle of Miralax. Be sure to get this size. It is also over the counter. The generic form is fine.
3. 64-ounce bottle of Gatorade, Propel, or similar product (no red flavors)
4. Tuck’s pads or Vaseline can be used to protect the anal area especially if you have hemorrhoids.

**Colonoscopy Preparation Timeline**  
**Five or more days prior to colonoscopy:**
- Arrange for a ride. If you do not have a ride, we will have to cancel the procedure.
- Purchase the laxative medications listed above.
- Consider obtaining a protective ointment such as Preparation H, Desitin, or Vaseline to protect the anal area during the prep. You can start to apply it after you take the first laxative.
- If you are taking coumadin (warfarin), Plavix, or other blood thinners, contact us for specific instructions. These drugs and aspirin are usually stopped five days before the colonoscopy.

**One day prior to your colonoscopy:**
- Start on a Clear Liquid Diet when you get up and continue all day.

**Clear Liquid Diet**
Soups: Clear bouillon, chicken broth, vegetable broth, beef broth, or consommé

Beverages: Tea, coffee (without cream/milk), Kool-Aid, carbonated beverages, Gatorade. *You may add sugar to coffee and tea but not milk or creamer (non-dairy creamers are okay).*

Juices: Cranberry, apple, grape, strained lemonade, limeade, and orange drink. *Any juice that you can see through and has no pulp is acceptable.*

Dessert: Italian ices, popsicles, Jell-O, and hard candy.

- Do not drink red colored beverages or eat red Jell-O.
- No solid food of any kind.
- Throughout the day, make sure to drink at least eight glasses (two quarts) of fluids.
- Take your usual prescription medications (except iron), aspirin, and blood thinners like Coumadin and Plavix, as described above.
- **Diabetic Patients:** You may have your usual breakfast today and should take your diabetic medications. Monitor your blood sugar at your usual times.

2:00 p.m. Take two Dulcolax tablets by mouth with 8 or more ounces of fluids.

4:00 p.m. Mix the 238-gram bottle of Miralax in 64-ounces of Gatorade. Shake the solution until the Miralax dissolves. Drink eight-ounces every 15 minutes until the entire solution is gone.

- *You may continue to have clear liquids until midnight. After midnight, do not eat or drink anything except the colonoscopy prep and you should take your medications with sips of water.*

**The day of your colonoscopy:**
- Please be sure to take any blood pressure or heart medications the morning of the test with a sip of water.
- **Diabetic Patients:** Do NOT take your diabetes pills or insulin today, but bring a dose with you to take after your colonoscopy.
- When you are ready to leave, your designated driver will take you home where you can eat and relax the rest of the day. You will receive specific instructions about eating, activities, and medications before you leave.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. **Is there any way that I can make this taste any better?**
   You can try sucking on hard candy or rinse your mouth with water or a mouthwash. Do not eat or drink anything while you are drinking this solution.
2. **Why avoid red liquids?**
   The red color can persist in the colon and potentially look like blood.

3. **One of the medications I was instructed to take the morning of my procedure is red. Can I take it?**
   Medications for blood pressure, heart conditions, and seizures should be taken the morning of your exam regardless of the color.

4. **I feel like vomiting and do not think I can drink any more. What should I do?**
   It is important that you continue to drink the solution if possible. Without a clean bowel, the doctor will not be able to see the inside of your colon to complete the examination. If you do vomit, wait 30 minutes and begin drinking the solution again. If not improved, call us and have a phone number of an open pharmacy in case we need to call in a prescription.

5. **I drank a lot of the solution and have not gone to the bathroom yet. What should I do?**
   Keep drinking. Most people have a bowel movement after an hour; some patients may take two hours or longer.

6. **I am taking the prep and now having loose, watery stools. Do I still need the rest of the prep?**
   Yes, you may have solid stool higher in the colon that needs to be eliminated.

7. **I already have diarrhea before taking the prep, do I still have to take the laxative?**
   Yes, you must take the prep as directed by your doctor. Your colon is approximately six feet long. The entire colon must be emptied for your physician to see the colon clearly.

8. **I see yellow color in the toilet bowl and a few flecks. What do I do?**
   If you drank the entire solution or if your last bowel movements were clear enough that you were able to see the bottom of the toilet, you should be fine. It is okay if you have some flecks of material. The yellow color is a result of bile that normally colors the feces. This should not interfere with the examination.

9. **My bottom is so sore. What can I do?**
   To clean the area, avoid rubbing. Gently pat with a wet washcloth. Apply Vaseline, Preparation H, or Desitin liberally.

10. **Can I drink alcoholic beverages?**
    We strongly suggest that you do not drink any alcoholic beverages prior to your procedure since they can cause dehydration and some wines may thin your blood.

11. **Can I drink any nutritional supplements?**
    You may drink Ensure (chocolate or vanilla) or Slim-Fast with Soy Protein/Lactose Free. These drinks are water based, not milk based.

12. **Can I chew gum or suck candy?**
    Yes, but nothing with soft centers or red color.

13. **What if I am still passing stool the morning of my test?**
    Take a tap water enema until you run clear. If this does not work, call the office.
14. Can I brush my teeth?
   Please do.

15. Can I wear my dentures?
   Yes, you may wear your dentures to the endoscopy suite. However, you may be asked to remove them prior to the procedure.

16. I have been instructed not to take anti-inflammatories or blood thinners several days before the procedure. What can I take for headaches and pain relief?
   You may take Tylenol as directed.

17. Can I have chicken soup?
   You can only have the broth; no noodles, chicken, or vegetables allowed.

18. Can I have the colonoscopy if I am on my menstrual period?
   Yes, the procedure can still be performed.