

COLONOSCOPY – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

The colonoscopy instructions and FAQs are for UConn Health patients. If you're not a UConn Health patient, please get in touch with your provider with any questions.

What happens if I start drinking the preparation laxative and I become nauseated or start vomiting?

Slow down. If you're drinking the gallon preparation (e.g., TriLyte, NuLytely, or GoLytely), try to drink 4 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes after waiting about 30 minutes. Try to drink as much as you can, as this will improve the quality of the preparation and the quality of the examination.

What happens if I drink the preparation and get no results?

If you don't have frequent and progressively looser bowel movements within 3 hours of taking the preparation, you will likely need something else to help it work properly. Have someone purchase rectal suppositories from a pharmacy. Place one in the rectum, and if this doesn't help, call the GI office at (860) 679-3238.

Why do I have to have someone drive me home?

After your procedure is over, you may be sleepy, uncomfortable, nauseated, or simply not yourself. This is the effect of the medications used for sedation and the procedure itself. Your reflexes will be slowed until the following day, and you might injure yourself or others if you try to drive or operate machinery. Whenever possible, you should be around someone you know until the following day or at least until you arrive safely at home.

Can I take a bus or taxi home by myself after my procedure?

No. Due to the sedation given during the procedure, you are considered impaired. The sedation medication impairs your judgment and reflexes. A trusted person must be with you to accompany you on public transit.

Can I take aspirin, anticoagulants, or blood thinners before the procedure?

It is recommended that you talk to your GI doctor or the prescribing physician to find out if you should stop taking aspirin, arthritis medications, anticoagulants, and blood thinners about 4 days before the procedure to reduce the risk of bleeding if polyps need to be removed. In most cases, the procedure can still be performed if you forget to stop them. You should stop taking them as soon as you remember and call the GI office at (860) 679-3238. If you are taking Coumadin (warfarin), call the GI endoscopy unit at (860) 679-7595 as soon as you realize the error.

I am very thin. Do I still have to take all of the laxatives?

Yes. You must follow the preparation instructions provided. Your colon is approximately 6 feet long and must be completely emptied to help ensure an accurate and thorough examination.

I seem to be all “cleaned out” but haven’t finished my preparation. Do I need to finish it?

Yes. You must follow the preparation instructions provided to help ensure an accurate and thorough examination.

Can I use cream during the preparation to help with anal irritation I’m experiencing?

Yes, you may apply Desitin, A+D Ointment, Vaseline, or any other cream.

Can I have my colonoscopy if I am having my menstrual period?

Yes.

When can I eat after the procedure is done?

In general, you can eat immediately after your procedure as long as you avoid greasy or spicy foods. Please be aware that the sedation medication may cause mild nausea, and you may not have a full appetite until the following day.

Can I go back to work following my procedure?

Due to the sedation given during the procedure, you should plan to rest at home for the remainder of the day. The day after your procedure, you may resume your usual activities.

How will I learn the results of the test?

You will be told about the preliminary results of the test before you leave for home. You will also be given written information about these results, as it is common not to remember all of what is said soon after the procedure. If biopsies are performed or polyps are removed during the procedure, you will be contacted with the results in about one week.

Who can I call if I have questions regarding the preparation?

If you are a patient scheduled for a colonoscopy at UConn Health and have problems with the preparation and/or have questions during weekday hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), call (860) 679-3238 and ask to speak with the GI nurse.

If you are a patient scheduled for a colonoscopy at UConn Health and have problems with the preparation and/or have questions during the evening hours (after 4:30 p.m.) or on the weekend, call (860) 679-2626 and ask for the GI fellow on call.