



Preparing Your Diet Before a Colonoscopy

A clean colon is the single most important factor in an accurate exam. Following this diet timeline helps your doctor see clearly, find small polyps, and avoid the need to repeat the procedure.

Step 1 · Low-Fiber Diet

3–5 DAYS BEFORE

Switch to low-fiber (low-residue) foods. Fiber leaves residue in the colon that the prep solution can't always clear.

✓ EAT THESE

- White bread, white rice, plain pasta
- Eggs, tofu, skinless chicken, turkey, fish
- Well-cooked, peeled vegetables (no seeds)
- Canned or peeled soft fruits (no skin/seeds)
- Plain crackers, refined cereals (corn flakes, rice cereal)
- Smooth peanut butter, plain yogurt, cheese

✗ AVOID THESE

- Whole grains, brown rice, oatmeal, granola
- Nuts, seeds, popcorn, coconut
- Raw vegetables, salads, corn, peas
- Beans, lentils, chickpeas
- Fruit with skin or seeds (berries, grapes, dried fruit)
- Tough or fatty meats, fried foods

Step 2 · Clear Liquids Only

1 DAY BEFORE

No solid food the entire day before your procedure. A liquid is "clear" if you can read text through it. Drink often — hydration makes the prep easier and keeps you feeling better.

✓ CLEAR LIQUIDS — OK

- Water, sparkling water
- Clear broth or bouillon (chicken, beef, vegetable)
- Apple juice, white grape juice (no pulp)
- Black coffee or tea (no milk, cream, or non-dairy creamer)
- Sports drinks, clear sodas (yellow/green/orange OK)
- Gelatin and popsicles (light colors only)

✗ NOT ALLOWED

- Any solid food
- Milk, cream, smoothies, protein shakes
- Juice with pulp (orange juice, tomato juice)
- Alcohol
- Soup with noodles, vegetables, or cream
- ANYTHING red, purple, or blue (see below)

No Red, Purple, or Blue — Ever

Red, purple, and blue dyes can stain the colon lining and look like blood during your exam. Skip red gelatin, grape juice, red or purple sports drinks, and colored popsicles. Yellow, green, and orange are fine.



Step 3 · Bowel Prep Solution

EVENING BEFORE + MORNING OF

Most patients use a **split-dose** prep: half the solution the evening before, and the second half 4–6 hours before the procedure. Split dosing is proven to clean the colon better than a single dose. Follow the exact timing on your prescription instructions.

Tips for Getting the Prep Down

Chill the solution in the refrigerator · drink it through a straw placed toward the back of your tongue · suck on a lemon wedge or hard candy (not red/purple) between glasses · walk around between doses to help it work · stay near a bathroom and use a soft wipe or barrier cream to prevent irritation.

Step 4 · Day of Your Procedure

PROCEDURE DAY

Stop all liquids **2–4 hours before** your arrival time, or as directed by your anesthesia instructions. No gum, mints, or candy on procedure day. Arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home — you cannot drive after sedation.

Medications & Special Situations

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Tell our office in advance if you take any of the following — timing adjustments are often needed:

- Diabetes medications or insulin (doses usually change on clear-liquid day)
- Blood thinners (warfarin, Eliquis, Xarelto, Plavix, aspirin regimens)
- GLP-1 medications (Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro) — these slow stomach emptying
- Iron supplements — stop 5–7 days before; iron darkens the colon lining
- Weight-loss or fiber supplements

Most other daily medications can be taken with a small sip of water — confirm with your care team.

How You Know the Prep Worked

Your bowel movements should become watery and clear to light yellow — like urine or weak lemonade — with no solid pieces. If your output is still brown or cloudy after finishing the prep, call our office before your appointment.

When to Call Us

Call the office if you can't keep the prep solution down, develop severe abdominal pain or vomiting, feel dizzy or faint, or have any questions about your medications or timing. It's always better to ask than to guess.