

GETTING READY FOR A COLONOSCOPY

For People Using PICO-SALAX

Contact Information

For questions about your appointment or bowel prep instructions call the Waterloo Wellington Coordinated Colonoscopy Access Program: **519-749-4300, extension 2974.**

For any medical questions or concerns before your colonoscopy call the doctor doing your test. This phone number can be found on your **Colonoscopy Preparation Instructions** sheet.

**Waterloo Wellington
Regional Cancer Program**

Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)

What is a Colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a test using a small, plastic tube with a tiny camera at the end. During this test a doctor (Endoscopist, Gastroenterologist, or General Surgeon) will put the tube into your colon to:

- Collect tissue for testing (a biopsy)
- Check for cancer in your colon or rectum
- Look for areas of inflammation (your body's response to infection or illness)
- Look for causes of anemia (low red blood cells), abdominal pain, diarrhea, blood in your poop, or constipation

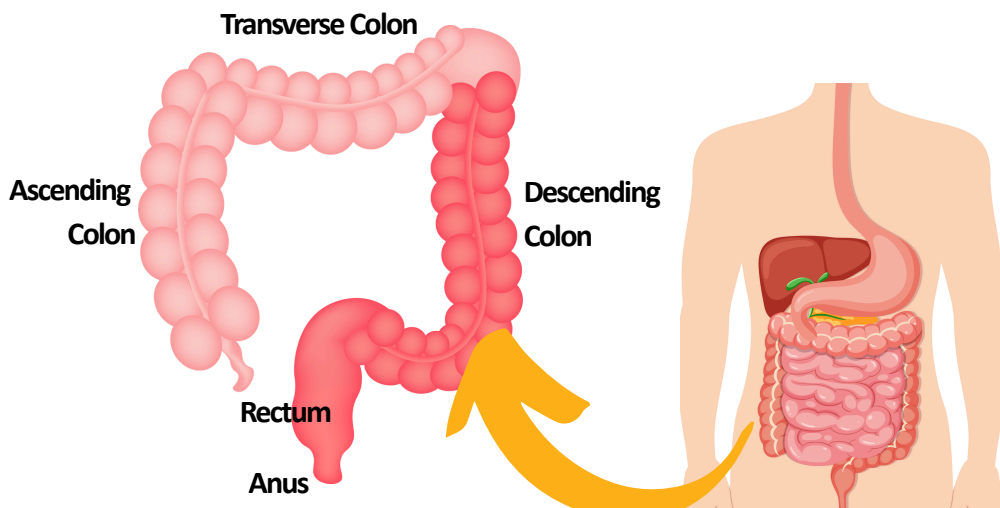


Image of the large intestine and where it is found in your body.

Risks of Having a Colonoscopy

The medicine you take to clean out your bowels (intestines) raises your risk for:

- Dehydration (losing more fluid than you are able to take in)
- Falls (weakness, fainting)
- Kidney problems
- Changes to your blood work

When having a colonoscopy there is a chance of:

- Bowel perforation (a hole in the colon)
- Heart or lung problems from the sleeping drugs
- Bleeding
- Infection

There is a **low** risk of having these health issues. If they happen, they will be treated by your healthcare team right away.

Before Your Colonoscopy

Stop Taking Some Medicines

There are some medicines that must be stopped before you have your colonoscopy. The doctor (or healthcare team) doing your colonoscopy will tell you which medicine(s) to stop. For example, this could be diabetes medicine or blood thinners. If you do not hear from them **1 week before** your colonoscopy appointment, call the doctors office.

Clean Out Your Bowels

Before you have your colonoscopy you will need to clean out your bowels. This is called “bowel prep”. You will be asked to take bowel medicines that work in different ways to make you poop. Some bowel medicine (like stimulant laxatives) speeds up how fast poop moves through your body. Other bowel medicines (like osmotic laxatives) pull water into your bowels to soften your poop, making it easier to pass.

These medicines will make you go to the toilet a lot and may cause cramping. It might take a few hours for the medicine to work. Sometimes you will have to go suddenly, so stay close to a toilet while taking these medicines. By the end of your bowel prep, your poop may look like a clear or yellow liquid.

It is very important you follow your bowel prep closely. Your colonoscopy may be cancelled if your bowel prep is not done well.



For bowel prep you will be taking: PICO-SALAX

Use PICO-SALAX

Read and follow your **Colonoscopy Preparation Instructions** sheet.


The cost of PICO-SALAX is usually covered for people over 65 years of age or for people on government financial assistance (e.g. Ontario Disability Support Program or Ontario Works). If you do not have coverage you may need to pay out-of-pocket.



Photo of a box of PICO-SALAX

Follow a Fluid Diet

Part of your bowel prep includes changing your food and drinks for a short period of time. You can use this guide to follow a fluid diet before your colonoscopy. Refer back to your **Colonoscopy Preparation Instructions** to see when you should start your fluid diet.

Fluids You CAN HAVE	 Foods & Fluids You CAN NOT HAVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear broth or water with bouillon cubes added (vegetable, beef, chicken) ✓ Clear juice without any pulp (e.g. apple juice, orange juice without pulp, lemonade, limeade) ✓ Sports drinks (e.g. Gatorade or Powerade) ✓ Lemon or lime Jell-O or popsicles ✓ Coffee or tea (with no dairy added) ✓ Clear carbonated drinks (e.g. sparkling water, 7-Up, gingerale, Sprite) ✓ Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ DO NOT have any red or purple liquids, Jell-O, or popsicles. The dye can make it harder for your doctor to do your test. ✗ No dairy (e.g. milk, smoothies, or yogurt) ✗ Solid foods
<p>Note: 5 days before your colonoscopy stop eating foods with seeds, nuts, or tough skins. This includes: popcorn, whole grain products, corn, cabbage, broccoli, beans or legumes.</p>	

Tips for a Fluid Diet

- Pick up the fluids you plan on drinking ahead of time. You might need to be near a toilet once you start your bowel prep and won't be able to go out to the store.
- Drink more than plain water; water will not give you the energy or nutrients you need in a day.
- Limit clear carbonated beverages to 1 can a day so that you do not trap gas in your bowels.
- If you are living with Chronic Kidney Disease or Diabetes and are not sure what to eat or drink during bowel prep, call the healthcare team that helps you manage that disease.

Drink at least 4 litres (16 cups) of liquid each day.

During your bowel prep make sure to drink at least 4 litres (16 cups) of liquid each day. This includes any liquids in the bowel medicine you are taking for your bowel prep. On average, this works out to you drinking 1 cup of fluid every 1 hour you are awake.

During Your Colonoscopy

Before the colonoscopy starts you will be given a sleeping medicine. This can make you feel calm, relaxed, drowsy, or fall asleep. Then:

- You will lie on your side. For the best view, you may be asked to change your position.
- A thin, plastic tube with a camera on the end is pushed past your anus into your rectum. The doctor will move this tube slowly through your colon.
- The test can last for 20 to 45 minutes.
- When finished, the doctor will slowly remove the tube from your colon.

After Your Colonoscopy

After you have your colonoscopy you:

- Will be monitored by the healthcare team for up to 1 hour.
- May be booked for a follow-up with the doctor.
- Will be sent home with instructions from your healthcare team.
- May have mild stomach cramps, bloating, or small amounts of blood in your poop for 1-2 days.
- Can eat solid food again, but start adding it back to your diet slowly over 24 hours.
- Should not travel for at least 2 weeks after your colonoscopy.

Have someone pick you up after your colonoscopy.

You are not able to drive or make important legal decisions for 24 hours after your colonoscopy.

Resources

Scan the QR code or click the links below to access more helpful resources.



About Colonoscopy



Colonoscopy Prep Tips



Screening for Colorectal Cancer



How Long Does a Colonoscopy Last?

Adapted from Cancer Care Ontario's "Preparing for your colonoscopy" material. Use this resource for your information only. It does not replace medical advice from your doctor or other healthcare professionals.



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