



## Colonoscopy Prep Tips

Adapted from [fightcolorectalcancer.org](http://fightcolorectalcancer.org)

A colonoscopy is a procedure where a colonoscope is inserted into the colon and guided all the way to the cecum in order to look for any problems along the colon. The colonoscope has a camera and a light at the end to allow the doctor to see any abnormalities.

Prior to the procedure, you will do a bowel preparation to clear out the colon. "Prep" is essentially a laxative, so you will spend a lot of time on the toilet. Colonoscopy prep is one of the most dreaded steps of colorectal cancer screening, but it is very important. **You must clean out your colon so the doctor can get a good look inside!!!** Here are some tips that can help with the prep.

1. Adjust your diet - eating smaller portions of lower fiber foods a few days before the procedure can help on prep day.

Suggestions: soups, smoothies, eggs, rice, salmon, chicken, pasta, steamed or cooked vegetables.

What to avoid: nuts and seeds, popcorn, red meat, fried or heavy foods, raw vegetables and fruits, and anything bright red in color.

2. Drink the laxative cold. Some people say using a straw helps as well.

3. Choose yummy treats for the liquid diet. Remember to avoid red or purple liquids or treats, and do not add milk or creamer.

Suggestions: broth, herbal teas, flavored coffee, Jell-O, flavored sparkling water, gummy bears, Crystal Light, soft drinks.

4. Bathroom prep - the following are supplies that can help with all that time in the bathroom.

- moist wipes of some kind, or just use soap and water in between
- double ply extra soft toilet paper (now is the time to splurge)
- to prevent or sooth irritation, use Vaseline, coconut oil etc. Make sure skin is completely dry before applying oil or cream.
- sit in a bath in between
- put a charger and cord in the bathroom and download some good books or podcasts
- elastic waisted pants will help when you are in a hurry!

5. Double check what time to start the prep, adjust if needed. Each person's body and nightly routine is different. Be sure to start early enough to prevent running to the toilet all night. Give yourself plenty of time for the laxative to start working.

6. It might be easier to drink each 32 oz prep drink as 8 oz every 15 minutes than 32 oz all at once. Just be sure you finish each prep dose within an hour.

7. Finish all the steps! It is very important that you finish all of the prep in order to clear out your colon. Even if you start having liquid, lighter colored stools it is important that you finish the whole thing.

8. Your first meal after the procedure should be a lighter meal - avoid spicy, greasy foods in order to give your colon time to "bounce back".

Congratulations! You have taken an important step in preventing or discovering early colon cancer! Encourage your friends to follow your lead! Early detection is the best prevention!