

Colonoscopy, general instructions

The colonoscopy lasts approximately for 30-60 minutes. Be prepared to stay at the hospital 2-5 hours. Please inform your doctor if you have a cardiac pacemaker or any anaesthetic allergies. The examination is conducted with a flexible endoscope inserted into the rectum and to the colon. During the examination, air or carbon dioxide is blown to the bowel through the endoscope.

If sedative medication is needed, your condition will be monitored 1-2 hours and you need to arrange someone to pick you up from the hospital and to accompany you for the rest of the evening. It is not allowed to drive a car or any motor vehicle when on sedative medication.

Preparing for the examination

Your colon must be emptied the day before the examination with a drinkable bowel cleansing solution available at pharmacies. Begin to follow the dietary restrictions one week before the examination. The bowel must be completely empty for the examination to be successfully completed. Stools must be liquid-like, almost clear.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, please contact the endoscopy unit prior to using any bowel cleansing solution.

Medication before the colonoscopy

Your home medication may continue as usual with a few exceptions:

- If you have diabetes, consult your own doctor or the endoscopy unit about the medication.
- Consult your own doctor or the endoscope unit if you need prophylactic antibiotics or if you are on anticoagulant medication (for example Marevan, Xarelto, Eliquis, Lixiana or Pradaxa)
- Stop taking your iron medication a week before the examination.
- Absorption of oral medication can be reduced due to the bowel cleansing.

Nutrition

A week before the examination:

- Do not eat seeds or berries, vegetables or fruits with peels (raspberry, tomato and grape)
- Do not eat bread with grain or seeds. Seeds can block the endoscope.

Three days before the examination:

- Start a low-fiber diet. Extend it to 5 days if you suffer from constipation and start taking laxatives (for example Movicol) 2-5 days before the examination.

Allowed low-fiber foods:

- fish, meat and their broth
- an egg
- fruit juice (not containing pulp), soft drinks
- milk, dairy products, yogurt without berries and ice cream
- white bread like French bread and baguettes
- rice, macaroni

Forbidden high-fiber foods:

- vegetables, berries and fruits
- rye-, graham- and wholegrain breads and porridge.
- brans, seeds and nuts

An Example of a low-fiber diet

Breakfast

- semolina-or rice gruel or rice krispies or natural yogurt
- white bread and butter
- cold cuts
- -juice without pulp
- coffee or tea and sugar

Lunch

- a portion of white rice or pasta (one meal can contain one potato)
- meat, fish or chicken and sauce
- cottage cheese
- white bread and butter
- juice, milk, sour milk, a sieved berry soup

Dinner like lunch

Snack

- a bun, cracker, couple of cookies or ice cream
- coffee, tea, juice or milk

Evening meal

- white bread, butter and cold cuts
- coffee, tea, juice or milk

A day before the examination

- Eat low-fiber breakfast and lunch as during previous days
- After 12 o`clock only drinks are allowed: sieved berry juice, juice without pulp, meat-or vegetable broth, tea, coffee, milk, soft drinks or water. If necessary, you can buy nutritional supplement drinks from the pharmacy.
- You are not allowed to eat anything during bowel cleansing.
- It is important to drink plenty of fluids because it enhances the cleansing of the bowel and makes you feel better.

After the examination

- You can eat. Start with light meal and by drinking more juice than usual.
- If you feel bloated and experience flatulence, moving around helps.
- On the day after the examination, there can be small traces of blood on your stools.

Contact either the endoscope unit or to emergency clinic

- if you have a severe stomach pain or excessive bleeding