

Patient Education | Digestive Health Center

Preparing for a Colonoscopy

Instructions for Clear Liquids – 1 Day Preparation

Plan ahead

For your own safety, you will not be able to drive or work for the rest of the day after the procedure.

Arrange to have a responsible adult take you home. You cannot take a taxi, rideshare such as Uber® or Lyft®, or public transportation by yourself. If you do not have someone who can take you home after your procedure, you can arrange a ride home from Illinois Medi-Car through Superior Ambulance Company by calling **312.926.5988**.

It is important to follow these instructions to prepare for your colonoscopy.

Be sure the person taking you home is prepared to answer our phone call during the admitting process. Your ride must be present in our department to pick you up. Our staff cannot escort you to the lobby or parking garage to meet them.

For information on our parking garage locations, parking deck fees and a map, visit **nm.org** > Locations > Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Plan to spend 3 to 3 1/2 hours at the hospital from your arrival time.

2 weeks before your colonoscopy

If you are taking an **anticoagulant (blood thinner)** medication other than aspirin, contact your prescribing physician for instructions on when to stop and/or take a temporary blood thinner while you are off your anticoagulant.

If you are taking a **medication for weight loss or diabetes**, [click here for instructions](#). Please contact the prescribing physician about how to take your diabetes medications to avoid low blood sugar.

Contact your insurance company to verify coverage and any out-of-pocket costs. You will need to give them the procedure and diagnosis codes.

You may also call Northwestern Medicine Financial Counseling Services at **312.926.6906** to discuss coverage eligibility and get an estimate for any out-of-pocket costs.

1 week before your colonoscopy

Follow these instructions for 7 days before your colonoscopy:

- › Stop eating all granola, whole grain bread, popcorn, nuts, quinoa, corn, grapes and seeds (chia, flax, hemp).
- › Stop taking all iron supplements, fiber supplements and anti-diarrheal medications.

Pick up your bowel preparation supplies at the drugstore.

- › Bowel prep prescription
- › Simethicone tablets (over-the-counter)

3 days before your colonoscopy

Reduce the amount of fruit, vegetables and beans in your diet. There is no exact amount, but just do your best to decrease these items in your diet.

Day before your colonoscopy

Diet

Do not eat any solid food the entire day before your procedure.

Follow a clear liquid diet as soon as you wake up. Clear liquids include any of the following:

- › Water
- › Apple juice
- › White grape juice
- › Lemonade without pulp
- › Broth/bouillon without noodles or vegetables
- › Gelatin (Jell-O®)
- › Popsicles/Italian ice
- › Clear soda (lemon-lime or ginger ale)
- › Coffee/tea without milk or creamer

Avoid red- and purple-colored food and drinks since these may stain your bowel.

Bowel prep

Follow the instructions about how to take the prep that your care team gave you, not what is on the product box. This may mean you have to wake up in the middle of the night for your 2nd dose of the bowel prep.

If you have any of these symptoms, contact your care team at **312.695.5620**.

- › Moderate or severe cold symptoms
- › A temperature more than 100.4 degrees F
- › Other changes in your health

Day of your colonoscopy

After midnight

Do not eat anything including gum, mints, chewing tobacco and cough drops.

After midnight and up to 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time

You may only drink the following items:

- › Bowel prep
- › Plain water
- › Apple juice
- › Sports drinks such as Gatorade® (no red or purple colors)
- › Tea without milk or creamer

Starting 2 hours before your arrival time

Do not eat or drink anything at all, including water.

Call **312.695.5620** if you complete your prep and your stool still has solid material in it or if you have not had a bowel movement.

What to bring with you

- › Glasses (not contacts)
- › Photo ID
- › Insurance card
- › Pacemaker/defibrillator card, if you have them

Leave all your valuables and jewelry at home.

Contact information

Northwestern Memorial Hospital Digestive Health Center office hours are Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm.

- › For scheduling-related matters, call **312.926.0628**.
- › For clinical concerns and questions, call **312.695.5620**.
- › For Northwestern Medicine Financial Counseling Services, call **312.926.6906**.