

Preparing for a colonoscopy with Purg-Odan or Pico-Salax



You will soon undergo a test called a colonoscopy. This fact sheet explains what this test is for and how to prepare for it.

What is a colonoscopy?

It's a test that allows the doctor to see inside the colon and rectum with a camera.

What does this test involve?

Before starting, you will be given a mild sedative. It will help you to relax and will reduce discomfort during the test.

Then the doctor will insert a flexible tube the size of a finger through the anus. The test takes about 20 minutes.

Are there any risks?

They are minimal:

- bleeding: fewer than 1 in 100 or 1 in 200 cases
- perforation of the intestine: fewer than 1 case per 1,000 to 1 case per 2,000

Are there any contraindications?

There are very few. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis. However, if you're pregnant or think you may be pregnant, the nurse should be told about it. If you have not already discussed it, call the nurse at the number given on page 2 of this sheet.

How do I prepare for the test?

There are several things you need to do before the test.

MEDICATIONS

The following medications require special attention:

- > **anticoagulant and antiplatelet** drugs to "thin" the blood (make it more fluid)
- > medications for **diabetes**

If you take one of these, call the nurse at the phone number provided on page 2. The nurse will give you instructions.



Unless otherwise advised by your doctor, you can take other medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories) as usual.

SUPPLEMENTS



Don't take iron supplements during the **7 days before** the test.

SPECIAL DIET

It's very important that you follow this diet so the doctor can see your colon properly. Otherwise, the test may have to be repeated.

For 3 days before the test, don't eat:

- whole grain bread and pasta (such as multigrain bread), whole grain cereals, brown rice
- milk, dairy products, or substitutes (soy milk, almond milk, etc.)
- fruits and vegetables
- legumes (red beans, lentils, chickpeas, etc.)
- nuts and seeds
- chips, popcorn, coconut, jams, sauces

PREPARATION ON THE DAY BEFORE THE EXAM

This step is done to clean your intestine of any trace of food. Follow the instructions in the appendix on pages 3 and 4.

What should I bring on the day of the test?

- > Your up-to-date health insurance card.
- > A complete and up-to-date list of your medications provided by your pharmacist.



Please leave all jewellery, piercings, and valuable objects at home.

How much time will I need for this test?

Altogether, you should plan on at least 4 hours.



Arrange to have someone go with you on your return home. Over the next 24 hours, your attention will be impaired because of the sedative. Don't drive a vehicle, use dangerous tools, or make any legal decisions.

What happens after the test is finished?

You will be kept under observation for about 30 minutes. A doctor will meet with you and give you information about your follow-up.

Who do I talk to if I have questions?

You can call the following telephone number, Monday to Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.:
> **514 890-8356**



USEFUL RESOURCES

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our web site
chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
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The day before the test (after your diet), follow the steps described in this appendix one by one. Make sure you have all the items needed.

ITEMS NEEDED

Laxatives

You can buy these at a pharmacy.



- 2 packets of Purg-Odan or Pico-Salax



- 2 Dulcolax tablets

Clear liquids

You will need to drink plenty of fluids. To not interfere with the test, these liquids must be clear (it should be possible to see through them). Have some of these clear liquids on hand:

- Water
- Apple juice, white grape juice, white cranberry juice
- Chicken or vegetable broth
- Ginger Ale, 7 Up
- Tea, tisane (herbal tea)
- Jell-O (not red)



Note. Don't drink only water.



ATTENTION!

Examples of liquids you should **NOT** drink:

- Milk
- Orange, plum and grape juice (white grape juice is okay)
- Beef broth
- Dark carbonated drinks (such as Coke, Pepsi)



STEPS TO FOLLOW

The day before the test

- > Don't eat breakfast, lunch or supper.
- > Drink clear liquids all day long (see examples on page 3). You can drink as much as you want.
- > **At 3:00 p.m.:** Prepare the Purg-Odan or Pico-Salax solutions. Each packet should be poured into a glass containing 150 ml of water (2/3 cup). Use two different glasses. Stir for 2 to 3 minutes. Put the solutions in the refrigerator to improve the taste. (They can also be prepared earlier in the day).
- > **At 7 p.m.:** Drink the first solution. Then drink 6 large glasses of clear liquid (1.5 to 2 litres) within the next 4 hours. This helps to prevent dehydration.
- > **At 9:00 p.m.:** Take the 2 tablets of Dulcolax.



The morning of the test

- > Don't eat breakfast.
- > **4 hours before your appointment:** Drink the second solution of Purg-Odan or Pico-Salax. Then drink 4 large glasses of clear liquid within the next hour.
- > Clear liquids are allowed up to 3 hours before the time of your test.



NOTEPAD



Questions

Write down any questions you want to ask your care team so you don't forget anything.



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