

# PATIENT EDUCATION

## Having a Colonoscopy

**To be fully prepared, you must read this booklet from cover to cover.**

Your colonoscopy will be performed by \_\_\_\_\_ (doctor)  
on \_\_\_\_\_ in  
Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center (Hospital) 1900 South Avenue, La Crosse.

Be at the Gastroenterology desk by \_\_\_\_\_ . (time to arrive)

Take elevator E to level 5. **Your driver must be with you.** This is for your safety because we are going to sedate you (make you sleepy and relaxed). You will not be able to drive for the rest of the day.

Follow these instructions **very carefully**. If your “prep” is not correct and complete, a repeat colonoscopy could mean extra cost for you.

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**To cancel or reschedule:** Call (608) 775-2702 or  
(800) 362-9567, ext. 52702 as soon as you know you cannot keep your appointment.

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## **10 to 14 days before colonoscopy day**

Check your insurance. Make sure your colonoscopy is covered. Will a co-pay or any pre-payment be due on the day of your procedure?

Call your pharmacy. See if your prescribed prep is ready for pick-up.

**Do you take laxatives or Miralax** for frequent constipation?

- Keep taking these until you start drinking prep.

**Did you have trouble getting clean** enough for past colonoscopies?

- You may need different prep instructions. Call (608) 775-2022 or (800) 362-9567, ext. 52022 and talk with a nurse.

**Were you uncomfortable during a previous colonoscopy** even with conscious sedation?

- We may need to arrange different anesthesia for you. Call (608) 775-2702 or (800) 362-9567, ext. 52702 and talk to a scheduler.

**If you take a blood thinner:**

- Arixtra<sup>®</sup> (fondaparinux)
- Brilinta<sup>®</sup> (ticagrelor)
- Coumadin<sup>®</sup> (warfarin)
- Effient<sup>®</sup> (prasugrel)
- Eliquis<sup>®</sup> (apixaban)
- Other
- Lovenox<sup>®</sup> (enoxaparin)
- Plavix<sup>®</sup> (clopidogrel)
- Pletal<sup>®</sup> (cilostazol)
- Pradaxa<sup>®</sup> (dabigatran etexilate)
- Xarelto<sup>®</sup> (rivaroxaban)

A nurse who assists the doctor who prescribes your blood thinner should call you. You will be told if and when to reduce your dose or stop taking these pills. If no one calls, **call your primary care provider for instructions.**

**If you have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes:**

Call your doctor or diabetes educator **now**. Ask how to manage blood sugar and medicine during bowel prep.

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## 5 days before colonoscopy day

**Stop taking iron supplements.** Read your multivitamin label. If it contains iron, stop taking it.

## 3 to 5 days before colonoscopy day

A nurse will call you to review instructions. You will be told what medicine to take and when. If a voice mail is left, **you must return the call so you are properly prepared.**

## 2 days before colonoscopy \_\_\_\_\_ (day and date)

Diet affects how thorough your prep can be. A low fiber diet today will reduce stress on your tender rectum tomorrow. Starting this morning,

### do not eat:

- Nuts
- Beans
- Berries with seeds
- Corn
- Popcorn
- Multi-grain bread, cereals, crackers and other products
- Seeds
- Peas
- Fruit or vegetable skins

**Do not** take fiber supplement powder, tablets, chews or bars, such as:

- Metamucil®
- Citrucel®
- Fibercon®
- Other brands or generic products

**Do not** take vitamins and supplements that contain these or other oils:

- Fish oil
- Flaxseed oil
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin E

Drink **at least eight (8) glasses of clear liquid** throughout the day. Each glass should be at least 8 ounces. **Do not count coffee, tea or alcohol** of any kind among your 8 glasses.

**Mix your prep.** Follow these instructions instead of those on or inside the jug: Add lukewarm water, shake well and refrigerate.

**Do not eat any solid food after midnight.**

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**1 day before colonoscopy** \_\_\_\_\_ (day and date)

**You are on a clear liquid diet** all day. You must be able to **see through** what you drink. No smoothies or shakes! **Do not** eat any solid food. **Do not** drink red or purple liquids. You can have:

- Water
- Popsicles®
- Kool-Aid®
- Hard candy
- Jell-O® (not red or purple)
- Soft drinks - 7UP, Sprite or cola
- Pedialyte or Gatorade®
- Clear, fat-free broth or bouillon
- Black coffee or tea (no milk or non-dairy creamer)
- Clear juices: apple and white grape

**If you have diabetes** and are concerned about having low blood sugar during the prep period or on colonoscopy day, carry glucose tabs with you on those days.

**6 p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_ (day before colonoscopy)

**Time to start drinking prep!**

If flavor packets did not come with your prep, you may add Crystal Light®. **Do not** use red or purple flavors.

- You may prefer to flavor each glass instead of the whole jug.
- Try using a straw.
- Rinse with mouthwash or warm water and spit it out.
- Sip soda or pulp-free juice or suck hard candy between glasses.

Feeling chilled? Drink prep at room temperature or drink warm, clear liquids such as:

- Clear, fat-free broth or bouillon
- Black coffee or tea—**no** dairy products or non-dairy powder or liquid

**Every 15 minutes**, drink 8 ounces of prep as quickly as you can. Do not sip. **You must drink half the jug in 2 hours**. If you feel full, bloated, or sick to your stomach, take a 15 to 30-minute break. Start drinking again.

You will have diarrhea. **When the jug is half empty, stop.** You will drink the rest early in the morning. Drink clear liquids until bedtime.

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**Colonoscopy day** \_\_\_\_\_(date)

At \_\_\_\_\_ start again. **Every 15 minutes**, drink 8 ounces of prep as quickly as you can. Do not sip. **You must drink the rest of the jug in 2 hours.** You can also drink clear liquids until the jug is empty.

Drink **nothing** from now on except a sip of water with normal morning pills. **Do not** take blood thinner or diabetes pills.

- Brush your teeth and use mouthwash. Rinse and spit if your mouth is dry.
  - When the jug is empty, your bowel movements should be pale yellow or see-through liquid.
  - Check your blood sugar if you are diabetic. Follow guidelines from your primary care provider or diabetic educator
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**When you come to the clinic**

Plan to be here 2 to 3 hours. **Bring this booklet and:**

- **Insurance card(s)**
- **Your driver**
- C-PAP machine if you have sleep apnea
- Your current list of prescribed medicine, over-the-counter and herbal products. Include the **date and time of your last dose of each one.**

Leave jewelry, piercings, watch, phone and wallet at home or with your driver. We recommend you **use our free valet parking service.**

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**Rules for safe recovery after sedation**

Follow these rules until 6 a.m. the day after your colonoscopy. You may feel tired, lightheaded or forgetful. Take it easy and rest. An adult should stay with you. When getting up, change positions slowly. Return to normal diet unless you are given other directions.

**Do not** drive or operate motorized equipment.

**Do not** use tobacco or drink alcohol today.

**Do not** sign papers or make major decisions.

You may begin taking prescribed medicine **except:**

- **Blood thinner** – Before you are discharged, you will be told when to restart this medicine.
- **Prescribed pain medicine** - Wait at least 4 hours after your procedure before you take a dose.

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### **Call right away if you have:**

- Severe abdominal pain, other than gas cramps
- A firm, bloated belly
- Fever of 101° F or higher
- Vomiting
- More than 3 tablespoons of blood coming from your rectum
- Redness, warmth or swelling at your IV site even after you apply a warm, moist cloth

**8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays:** (608) 775-2022 or  
(800) 362-9567, ext. 2022

### **After hours, weekends and holidays**

Telephone Nurse Advisor: (608) 775-4454 or (800) 858-1050

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### **Colonoscopy video**

Watching a 5-minute video is part of your prep. **If you have a MyCare account**, an email from [donotreply@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:donotreply@gundersenhealth.org) will tell you to sign in for a new message. A link is in the message. – or – Go to [www.gundersenhealth.org/patiented](http://www.gundersenhealth.org/patiented) and select Colonoscopy. You can also watch it on colonoscopy day while we get you ready.

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## **Common questions**

### **Do I have to drink all of the bowel prep?**

Yes! Keep drinking even after bowel movements are pale yellow or clear (see-through) fluid. Your colon is not ready until you drink every ounce and bowel movements are free of solid matter.

### **What if I have questions or problems at night or on weekends?**

Telephone Nurse Advisor: (608) 775-4454 or (800) 858-1050

### **Will I meet with the doctor?**

The doctor visits before and after your procedure.

### **Will I be asleep?**

We give you just enough medicine for comfort and safety. You may or may not sleep.

### **Can I work after my colonoscopy? What about the next day?**

Do not plan to work. Resume your normal routine the next day.

**Colonoscopy** can detect colon and rectal cancer at all stages. It is the best colon screening method. With a slim, flexible, lighted tube, the doctor views your entire large intestine (bowel) to find causes of:

- New changes in bowel habits
- Blood in your stool or coming from your rectum

### **Risks**

- A hole or tear in colon wall might require repair
- Infection
- Bleeding after a biopsy or polyp removal
- Reaction to medicine given before and during exam

### **Benefits**

- Provides more information than other colon exams or tests.
- Polyps can be removed or biopsied before they turn into cancer.

## **Alternatives**

Not as accurate but may be used if you should not or cannot have a colonoscopy. Early stage cancer is more likely to be missed. These are better than no screening at all.

- FIT (fecal immunochemical test)
- Cologuard® (DNA testing of stool)
- CT colonography (CAT scan of colon)
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy - Lower third of colon is viewed
- Barium enema
- Fecal occult blood test (Hemoccult)

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## **Parking for Gastroenterology (GI) Procedures at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center**

For driving directions, use **Find a Location** on [gundersenhealth.org](http://gundersenhealth.org)

Follow medical center signs on South Avenue. Turn at 7th Street. Take the first left. We recommend you use our free valet parking service. It is offered from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays.

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This information is meant to inform and educate our patients. It supports the care you receive from your health care team. It does not replace medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment. Talk to your doctor or health care team before starting any new treatment.

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