



Preparing for a long colonoscopy

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Your doctor has prescribed a colonoscopy for you. It is important that you read and fully understand the following information.

Before the colonoscopy, you will have a chance to talk about any concerns with the doctor who will be performing the exam. You will also have to sign a consent form stating that you agree to the exam.

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is an exam that allows the doctor to see inside the intestine (colon). The exam consists of introducing a flexible tube equipped with a camera into your anus to examine the entire large intestine. If necessary, small pieces of surface tissue will be collected (biopsies) or tissue growths (polyps) will be removed.

The exam lasts about 30 minutes. After it is over, your vital signs will be monitored for 15-45 minutes. You should plan to spend about 3 hours at the hospital, from your arrival to your departure.

Before the colonoscopy

How to prepare for the exam

The quality of the exam will depend on how well you follow the preparation instructions. The intestine needs to be completely cleansed in order for the exam to be accurate and complete. This means you will need to clear your intestine with a preparation (laxative) that will cause you to eliminate your stool.

It is very important to carefully follow the instructions for the laxative preparation, as well as the instructions below:

The day before the exam

You should avoid eating solid or pureed foods. Only certain clear liquids are allowed. It's important to drink liquids from the list below to keep you hydrated and help your colon cleanse itself.



Clear liquids allowed:

- water;
- sports drinks such as Gatorade or Powerade, **except red or purple flavours**;
- clear fruit juices (orange without pulp, apple, white cranberry, white grape, lemonade); **except red or purple flavours**;
- broth or clear consommé (beef or chicken);
- Jell-O, **except red or purple flavours**;
- white or pale soft drinks (e.g. Ginger Ale, 7up, Sprite, etc.);
- iced tea;
- Kool-Aid, **except red or purple flavours**;
- black coffee, tea, herbal tea (**careful not to add milk or cream**).



Prohibited liquids:

- dairy products;
- drinks such as Boost, Ensure, Glucerna;
- juice with pulp;
- tomato or vegetable juice;
- red- or purple-coloured liquids;
- dark or coloured soft drinks (e.g. Coke, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, etc.);
- alcohol.

What to do about your current medications

The morning of your exam

Take all of your morning medications as usual, except those mentioned below, **at 6 a.m. with a sip of water**.

Some medications require you to follow special instructions:

- **Anticoagulants** (*Coumadin, Pradaxa, Eliquis, Xarelto, Sintrom, Warfarine* or *Lixiana*) or **antiplatelet drug** (*Plavix, Ticlid, Effient, Brilinta, Aggrenox*);
- Insulin tablets or injections **for diabetics**;
- **Iron supplements**.



*** When making your colonoscopy appointment, don't forget to mention that you are taking medication. You will be given verbal instructions about taking these.**

The day of the colonoscopy

- Arrive **30-45 minutes** before your exam time.
It is important to respect the time you are asked to arrive for the exam.
- Bring your health insurance card, hospital card and up-to-date list of medications (available from your pharmacy).
- Tell the nurse about any allergies.
- Do not wear any jewelry.



Important reminder:

During the exam, you will be given medication that may cause drowsiness or impair your judgement.

- You must **be accompanied for the return home.**
- You must **not drive a motor vehicle**, operate machinery or make important decisions **for 24 hours after** your exam.
- Do not **drink alcohol** or **take drugs** for **24 hours before and 24 hours after** your exam.

What will happen during the colonoscopy?

When you arrive, an intravenous line will be set up to administer a relaxant (sedative) and a painkiller (analgesic) during the exam. You'll feel more comfortable, but not completely asleep. Note that your vital signs will be monitored during sedation.

During the exam, you will probably feel swelling sensation in your stomach. You may also experience some cramping, which usually lasts for only a few seconds.

Contact information for healthcare centres

Territory of Grand Suroît

450-371-9920, ext. 2597

(Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.)

- ☐ **Hôpital du Suroît**
150 rue Saint-Thomas
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield
- ☐ **Centre multiservices
de santé et de services
sociaux de Vaudreuil-Dorion**
3031 boulevard de la Gare
Vaudreuil-Dorion
- ☐ **Barrie Memorial Hospital**
28 rue Gale
Orms town

Territory of Châteauguay

450-699-2514

(Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.)

- ☐ **Hôpital Anna-Laberge**
200 boulevard Brisebois
Châteauguay

**If you need to cancel
your appointment, please
let us know 48-72 hours
in advance by calling the
telephone number for the
territory where your exam
is scheduled to take place.**

After the colonoscopy

Once you've left the clinic, you can:

- Gradually resume eating according to your tolerance, **unless otherwise advised by the doctor** who performed the exam.
- Resume prescribed medications, **unless otherwise advised by the doctor** who performed the exam.

Side effects and possible complications

During the colonoscopy, biopsies may be taken and polyps may be removed. These procedures are generally safe. However, in **rare cases**, complications such as bowel perforation or bleeding may occur. **These complications are uncommon.**

Other, more common side effects can also occur following a colonoscopy:

- Mild to moderate abdominal pain and bloating
(**during the first 24 hours**);
- A small amount of blood in the stool (**during the first 24-48 hours**).

If you were given a relaxant (sedative) or a painkiller (analgesic), you may experience:

- Drowsiness, headaches or impaired judgement;
- Dry mouth, nausea and temporary constipation;
- Dizziness, balance problems or clumsiness.

These side effects are normal and will disappear shortly.



Important

Do not go to the hospital if you develop symptoms such as cough, fever, difficulty breathing, sudden loss of taste and smell, or if you have been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 or who is awaiting test results.

Reference:

Avis sur la surveillance clinique des clients qui reçoivent des médicaments ayant un effet dépressif sur le système nerveux central (OIIQ 2009)/Lignes directrices sur les soins infirmiers en coloscopie chez l'adulte (OIIQ 2016)

Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
de la Montérégie-Ouest



santemonteregie.qc.ca/ouest