



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

MiraLAX® Bowel Prep

This information describes how to take polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX) to empty your colon before your surgery or procedure. This is also called bowel preparation or bowel prep.

Your care team will tell you if you need to do MiraLAX bowel prep before your surgery or procedure.

Buy your supplies

Your nurse will check off the supplies you will need. You can buy these supplies at your local pharmacy without a prescription.

- ☐ 1 (238-gram) bottle of polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX).
- ☐ 1 (64-ounce) bottle of a clear liquid.

You may also want to buy the following:

- ☐ Clear liquids to drink during the day before your surgery or procedure.
- ☐ A pitcher to mix the MiraLAX and 64 ounces of clear liquid.

The day before your surgery or procedure

Follow a clear liquid diet

You will need to follow a clear liquid diet the day before your procedure. A clear liquid diet includes only liquids you can see through. You can find examples in the “Clear liquid diet” table.

When you’re on a clear liquid diet:

- Do not eat any solid foods.
- Do not drink anything red, purple, or orange.
- Try to drink at least 1 (8-ounce) cup of clear liquid every hour you’re awake.
- Drink different types of clear liquids. Do not just drink water, coffee, and tea. This helps to make sure that you get enough calories. This is an important part of your colonoscopy prep.
- If you have diabetes, drink only sugar-free clear liquids and check your blood sugar level often. If you have any questions, talk with your healthcare provider.

Clear liquid diet		
	OK to have	Do not have
Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear broth, bouillon, and consommé.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anything with pieces of food or seasoning.

Sweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gelatin, such as Jell-O®. • Flavored ices. • Hard candies, such as Life Savers® and lemon drops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything red, purple, or orange. • All other sweets.
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear fruit juices, such as lemonade, apple, white cranberry, and white grape juices. • Soda, such as ginger ale, 7UP®, Sprite®, and seltzer. • Sports drinks, such as Gatorade® and Powerade®. • Coffee or tea without milk or creamer. • Water, including carbonated (fizzy) and flavored water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything red, purple, or orange. This includes red, purple, and orange juices, sodas, and sports drinks. • Juices with pulp. • Nectars. • Smoothies or shakes. • Milk, cream, and other dairy products. • Nut milks, plant milks, non-dairy creamers, and other dairy alternatives. • Drinks with alcohol.

Get your MiraLAX bowel prep ready

The morning of the day before your surgery or procedure: Mix all 238 grams of MiraLAX with 64 ounces of clear liquid until the MiraLAX powder dissolves. Once the powder dissolves, you can put the mixture in the refrigerator, if you want to.

Take your MiraLAX bowel prep

At 5 p.m. on the day before your surgery or procedure , start drinking the MiraLAX mixture. It will cause frequent bowel movements, so make sure you're near a bathroom.

- Drink 1 (8-ounce) cup of the mixture every 15 minutes until it's gone.
- When you finish the MiraLAX mixture, drink 4 to 6 cups of clear liquids.
- Apply zinc oxide ointment or Desitin® to the skin around your anus after every bowel movement. This helps prevent irritation.

Eating and drinking after your MiraLAX bowel preparation

Instructions for eating



Stop eating at midnight (12 a.m.) the night before your procedure. This includes hard candy and gum.

Your healthcare provider may have given you different instructions for when to stop eating. If so, follow their instructions. Some people need to fast (not eat) for longer before their procedure.

Instructions for drinking

Between midnight (12 a.m.) and 2 hours before your arrival time, only drink the liquids on the list below. Do not eat or drink anything else. Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time.

- Water.
- Clear apple juice, clear grape juice, or clear cranberry juice.
- Gatorade or Powerade.
- Black coffee or plain tea. It's OK to add sugar. Do not add anything else.
 - Do not add any amount of any type of milk or creamer. This includes plant-based milks and creamers.
 - Do not add honey.
 - Do not add flavored syrup.

If you have diabetes, pay attention to the amount of sugar in your drinks. It will be easier to control your blood sugar levels if you include sugar-free, low-sugar, or no added sugar versions of these drinks.

It's helpful to stay hydrated before procedures, so drink if you are thirsty. Do not drink more than you need. You will get intravenous (IV) fluids during your procedure.



Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time.
This includes water.

Your healthcare provider may have given you different instructions for when to stop drinking. If so, follow their instructions.

Other instructions

Take only the medicines your healthcare provider told you to take, with a few sips of water.

Follow any other instructions your healthcare provider gave you about your surgery or procedure.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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