Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

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'll need to follow a clear liquid diet the day before your surgery or procedure. A clear liquid diet includes only liquids you can see through. You can find examples in the "Clear liquid diet" table.

Ask your healthcare provider if you should avoid red, orange, or purple liquids. This will depend on your surgery or procedure.

While you're following a clear liquid diet:

- Do not eat any solid foods.
- 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.
- Do not drink any liquids you can't see through, such as milk or smoothies.
- Do not drink sugar-free liquids unless you have diabetes and a member of your care team tells you to.

How to follow a clear liquid diet if you have diabetes

Ask the healthcare provider who manages your diabetes:

- What to do while you're following a clear liquid diet.
- If you need to change your dose of insulin or other diabetes medicine(s), if you take them.
- If you should drink sugar-free clear liquids.

Check your blood sugar level often while you're following a clear liquid diet. If you have questions, talk with your healthcare provider.

Clear liquid diet		
	OK to have	**Do not have**
Soups	• Clear broth, bouillon, and consommé.	• Anything with pieces of food or seasoning.
Sweets	• Gelatin, such as Jell-O®. • Flavored ices. • Hard candies, such as Life Savers®, lemon drops, and peppermints.	• All other sweets.
Drinks	• Clear fruit juices, such as lemonade, apple, cranberry, and grape juices. • Soda, such as ginger ale, 7UP®, Sprite®, and	• Juices with pulp. • Nectars. • Smoothies or shakes. • Milk, cream, and other dairy products.

	seltzer. • Sports drinks, such as Gatorade® and Powerade®. • Black coffee or plain tea without milk or creamer. • Water, including carbonated (fizzy) and flavored water. • Clear nutritional drinks, such as Boost® Breeze, Ensure Clear™, Pedialyte®, and Diabetishield®.	• 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 is dissolved, 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.

If your healthcare provider told you to stop eating earlier than midnight, 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 these 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.

Other instructions

Take only the medicines your healthcare provider instructed 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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