

Preparing for a colonoscopy (appointments after 12.30pm)

Information for patients

Your doctor has recommended you have a colonoscopy. It is important that you understand why you are having this test. If you are not clear about the reasons, please check with your doctor (hospital specialist) beforehand or the endoscopist who will be doing your colonoscopy, when you come to King's for your test.

We need a clear view of the lining of your bowel to ensure your test is successful. If we cannot get a clear view you may need to have the test again.

You have been given some sachets of Picolax to help empty your bowel and prepare it for your colonoscopy. This is a laxative which will make you have frequent, loose, watery motions. This is normal and shows the laxative is working. Make sure you can get to a toilet until its effects wear off. For some patients, Picolax is not suitable or effective.

If you have been given sachets of Moviprep instead, please follow the manufacturer's instructions on the information leaflet in the box (not the section below).

How do I make up a sachet of Picolax?

Empty the contents of one sachet into a glass of cold water (200ml). Stir for a minute until the powder has all dissolved. If it becomes hot when you stir it, wait until it has cooled down before drinking the whole solution. Once the solution is ready, drink it straight away. If you are able to, drink a glass of water straight afterwards.

How do I prepare my bowel for the colonoscopy?

On the day before your test:

- Eat a light breakfast, such as a slice of toast or a small bowl of cereal, but no nuts or seeds.
- After this breakfast, do not eat or drink any solid food, thick soups, milk, orange, tomato or grapefruit juice, nuts or seeds.
- You can drink water, Bovril, tea or coffee without milk, clear soup, squash (not blackcurrant) or fizzy water while you prepare your bowel.
- Take the first sachet of Picolax at 6pm.

On the day of your test:

- Take the second sachet of Picolax at 6am.
- Keep drinking plenty of fluids until two hours before your colonoscopy

Important information

- If you are taking iron tablets, please stop these at least one week before your colonoscopy. Iron makes the bowel preparation less effective.
- If you are taking Imodium (loperamide) or other drugs that slow down your bowels (make you constipated), please stop taking these two days before your colonoscopy.
- Even if you have diarrhoea you will still need to take the laxative. Loose, watery motions can be sticky and will make it impossible to see the lining of your bowel. The test will not be successful and you may have to have it repeated.

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 3601.

