

Bowel Preparation for Abdominal / Pelvic Surgery

What is Bowel preparation?

Bowel preparation is a procedure that is usually undertaken before a diagnostic intestinal evaluation or abdominal / pelvic surgery. It is a cleansing of the intestines from fecal matter and secretions. It usually includes a liquid diet and various preparations to empty your bowels.

Reasons for it

The ultimate goal of bowel preparation is to empty and cleanse the bowel. It is necessary in abdominal or pelvic surgery where the risk of bowel involvement is high. It is important to have a clean and empty bowel to minimize complications during any bowel surgery.

Do not take this if you have:

- Heart failure
- Kidney problems

Please discuss your medical problems with your doctor.

Details of bowel preparation – Step by step instructions

The day before the operation

Do not eat high fibre foods such as red meat, fruit, vegetables, cereals, salad, mushrooms, nuts, sweetcom, wholemeal bread etc. You are allowed tea, coffee, water, soups, apple or white grape juice, soda pop, Bovril etc. Clear jelly and ice cream are permitted. Avoid milk and milk products. However, you may have small amounts of milk in tea and coffee. In most cases, patients may continue to take other prescription medications at the usual time while they are restricted to clear liquids.

The solution will cause a person to have bowel movement in 30 minutes to 6 hours. The stools will be watery, similar to diarrhoea. Some intestinal cramping is normal. Please use a barrier cream such as zinc oxide on your bottom if there is soreness. Stay within easy reach of a toilet after commencing the preparation. If you have a tendency to develop haemorrhoids, be sure to have a haemorrhoid cream on hand. It contains a little bit of "local anaesthesia" to ease the discomfort.

8.00 am	Light breakfast (e.g coffee, tea, white bread, soup)
Noon	Light lunch (e.g porridge, white bread, soup, noodle, porridge)
3.30 pm	A drink (e.g coffee, tea, barley)
5.00 pm	Early light dinner (e.g porridge, white bread, soup, noodle, porridge)

- 6.00 pm ***Step 1***
Your doctor will usually give you medication for bowel preparation listed below. Prepare and drink the solution as described below:
Fortrans - Empty the content of the sachet into a bottle filled with 1 litre of water. Stir the content until completely dissolved. Drink and finish the solution slowly over a period of one hour e.g drink 2 glasses, and then 1 glass every 10 to 15 minutes until finish.
- 7.00 pm till
bedtime ***Step 2***
Drink as much fluids as you can to help replace the fluids you are losing during bowel movements. Generally, you are advised to drink another 8 to 10 glasses of clear liquids, taken slowly over a period of 2 hours (1.5 to 2 litres of clear fluid/water). You may continue to drink isotonic drink such as Gatorade, barley, clear soup or coffee/tea without milk.
- 8.00 pm Repeat the intake of bowel preparation solution one more time as in ***step 1 and 2*** (as above).

Consult your doctor if you have the following symptoms:

- Rectal bleeding
- Feeling thirsty, dizziness, urinating less than normal, vomiting and feeling weak. This may suggest dehydration.

Fasting prior to operation

This will depend on the time of the operation. You are required to fast for at least 6 hours before surgery (no food or drinks at all for 6 hours). For example, if the surgery is in the morning, you should skip breakfast. Fasting should start from 12 midnight. If it is in the afternoon, you can have an early light breakfast (eg. tea/coffee/milo and toast) but make sure that this is taken at least 6 hours before the surgery. Please reconfirm this with your doctor.

Disclaimer

This is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is important for readers to seek proper medical advice when necessary.

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