



# Colonoscopy Preparation

## Did You Know?

**A colonoscopy is a medical procedure that checks the colon for:**

- Inflammation.
- Ulcers.
- Abnormal growths that may lead to cancer.

**Colonoscopies are recommended for:**

- People age 45-75 at average risk of colon cancer.
- People with bowel trouble who have a family history of colon cancer.

If the person you care for has bloody stools, sudden weight loss, upset stomach or change in bowel habits (constipation or diarrhea) talk to their doctor to find out if a colonoscopy or other procedure is needed.

If the doctor recommends a colonoscopy, they will refer you to a gastroenterologist to schedule the procedure.

**Preparation is key to a successful procedure.**

Be sure to read the doctor's instructions carefully, ask questions and make sure the person you support knows what to expect.

***Colonoscopies can help save lives  
by detecting issues early.***

## Colonoscopy Preparation Risk Factors

Preparation for a colonoscopy usually starts the day before the procedure. Risk factors during preparation include:

- Not understanding or following the instructions.
- Drinking the wrong preparation solution, especially for people whose diet includes a thickening agent.
- Not staying hydrated.
- Not understanding how to use the prep solution with a specialized diet, such as thickened liquids.

### **WARNING:**

People whose diet requires a thickening agent can die from drinking preparation solution that turns to glue. Talk to their doctor or pharmacist to ensure you get a solution that's safe.



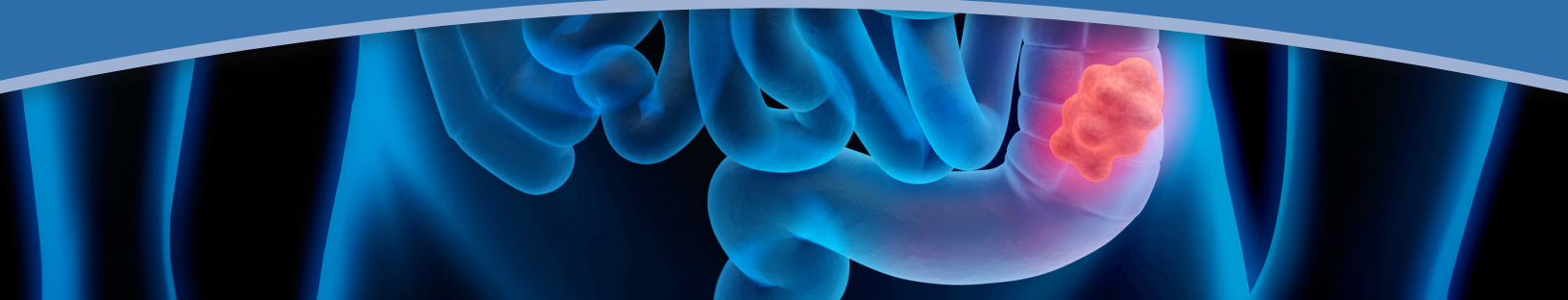
## Learn More

[American Cancer Society Guideline for Colorectal Cancer Screening](#)

[Preparing for a Colonoscopy, Harvard Medical School](#)

[How you can make colonoscopy prep easier, Harvard Medical School](#)

# Step by Step Prep



## A successful Colonoscopy Relies on Good Preparation



### Talk to the Doctor

- Tell the doctor about any specialized diet protocols, medical history and current medications.

**If the person uses thickening agents (such as SimplyThick or Clear DyspahgiAide), make sure they are compatible with the prepared solution.**

The pharmacy can help calculate how much thickener is needed. **Do not guess.** People can die if the thickening agent turns the solution to glue.

- Ask the doctor for anti-nausea medication if needed.
- Ask for specialized instructions that match the person's specific needs.
- Carefully read the preparation instructions. Tell the doctor if you have any concerns.



### Get Ready, Get Supplies

- Colonoscopy supplies include:
  - A prepared solution—liquid or powder.
  - Laxative.
  - Clear liquid.

**Make sure the solution has a pharmacy label with complete directions. If it doesn't, ask for one.**

**Tell everyone who lives or works in the house where the preparation solution is located and what it's for. Some solutions may require refrigeration. Keep it separate from other drinks.**

- Buy clear liquids. Avoid red dyes that could be confused with bleeding. If you're not sure what's allowed, ask the doctor's office.



### Prep Day Do's and Don'ts

- Make sure the person is comfortable and near a bathroom. The preparation causes frequent diarrhea.
- Do not schedule appointments. Stay home.
- Offer lots of clear fluids to avoid dehydration.
- Encourage drinking all of the preparation. This may be hard for some people to drink.
- Contact the person's doctor about concerns, such as:
  - Trouble drinking the preparation solution.
  - Vomiting or nausea.
  - Feeling faint, weak or ill.
  - Abdominal pain that is not relieved after 10 minutes of moving around or passing stool.
- If the person is unable to drink all of the preparation, tell the doctor. The colonoscopy may have to be rescheduled.



**Talk to your medical providers if you have any problems or concerns.**