Bowel Prep for Surgery

We all know that this is not easy, nor fun! It is just something that we have to do because it is a means to an end (no pun intended)! There are many ways to prep for surgery. This is what we would like you to do as we have found this to be the easiest and the one that most people tolerate the most. Having said that, if you do have problems tolerating the prep – please do call us early on so that we can help you through it, or try to find an alternate for you.

The success in a bowel prep is in how fast you drink it. The prep is to be taken over 3 to 4 hours and not just sipped on all day.

We usually recommend eating lightly for 3-5 days prior to the surgery. Limit the amount of fiber in your diet during this time period. Avoid things like beans, nuts, bran, whole grains, raw fruits and vegetables, raisins, seeds (like sunflower seeds) tomatoes, and salads. Make sure you are drinking plenty of fluids leading up to the day of your surgery and then as well, the day that you are prepping. Avoid drinks that are red in color.

The prep you will use is GoLytely. It comes as a powder in a jar. Mix the entire bottle with 4 liters (1 gallon) of a thin liquid like water or Gatorade. You are to drink the entire 4 liters over 3-4 hours or as fast as you can tolerate. It is best to have it in 8 ounce glasses, trying to finish each glass as quick as you can (over 10 minutes).

Try to start your prep close to 12 (noon) or so. You do not want to start too late and end up in the bathroom all night.

Most people tend to tolerate the prep best if it is cooled. Try in ice or at least placing the container in a bath of ice to cool it. Try drinking it through a straw.

Once you have finished the prep, you may continue to consume clear liquids for the rest of the day. Clear liquids are liquids that are thin like water and can essentially be seen through if you hold a clear glass of it up and look through the glass (water, ice tea, tea, Gatorade, jello, broth etc). Try drinking something with taste to it after the prep to get the taste of the prep out of your system. Remember that you are to stop all liquids after midnight.

The prep may start to work while you are in the middle of it or only after you have completed it. If you can tolerate, try to drink some of the normal thin liquids between the glasses of prep as this seems to help get the prep going the fastest.

If you find that you are getting sick and just cannot tolerate any more, take a break. You may be getting the cramps from the intestines starting to work. Give it a little time. Once this passes you can usually get back to the prep. This would be a good time to try something that is not part of the prep with a strong taste to it (flavored tea, lemonade, broth, etc).

The goal of the prep is to have mainly liquid stools passing – without any solid particles. Once you see this consistently, you may stop the prep, even if you have not completed the entire 4 liters.
Make sure that you are ready to get to the bathroom once you start. Once the prep kicks in, it is a pretty quick urge to go and having a pre-planned route is best. Be prepared to spend some time in the bathroom, so have things to do while there (books, magazines, I pod, etc). Warn those around you to try to use other bathrooms in the house if possible: you do not want to have the urge to go, and the bathroom is occupied.

If you are absolutely unable to tolerate the prep, call us early on and certainly if you are having any form of reaction to the prep: 954-966-8559.