



## Making the colon cleansing a more tolerable experience

For starters, please remember that the less debris left in your colon, the more sensitive the examination will be in detecting polyps, particularly the flat kind. Without proper preparation, the colonoscopy will not be successful and the test may have to be repeated. The nature and quantity of the colon prep used in our office, will achieve good to excellent results for the majority of patient, while minimizing inconvenience and side effects from the colon cleansing process. It is thus crucial that you read and familiarize yourself with the instructions given to you for your bowel preparation well in advance of the procedure. The bowel cleansing material is a prescription item, available at all pharmacies. You should have in your possession a prescription for the prepping solution which can be filled at all pharmacies.

The following are some of the complaints reported by patients and some suggestions:

1. **Nausea:** It is best to start with small sips of the medication. If you feel nauseated or vomit while taking the bowel preparation medication, wait 30 minutes before drinking more fluid. Try not to drink the bowel preparation medication while sitting down. This will increase the pressure on your stomach and will bring on, or worsen the nausea. Walking (around the house) or eating a few soda crackers may help decrease the nausea you are feeling. If the nausea persists, please contact us.
2. **The bowel preparation medication is thicker than water and slightly salty:** Sipping the bowel preparation medication through a thick straw will make the process more tolerable. Sucking on some hard candy, chewing gum or even having a few sips of soda in between drinks will prove helpful. In particular, a recent study showed that sucking on sugar-free *Halls cough drops with mentho-lyptus* will significantly improve on the taste and your tolerance of the cleansing solution. You will also find that chilling the bowel preparation medication *slightly* (by keeping it in the refrigerator for 15 to 20 minutes), will make drinking it more tolerable.
3. **Skin irritation around the anus:** This is caused by the frequent passage of liquid stools and mucus as well as irritation from the frequent wiping. For that, one should:
  - a. Apply Vaseline ointment to the skin around the anus **before** drinking the bowel preparation medications; these products can be purchased at any drug store.
  - b. Wipe the skin after each bowel movement with disposable wet wipes instead of toilet paper. For even better results,
  - c. Sit in a bathtub filled with warm water for 10 to 15 minutes to soak the anal area, blot the skin dry with a soft cloth, apply Vaseline ointment to the anal area, and place a cotton ball just outside your anus to absorb leaking fluid.