Bowel preparation for colonoscopy – Citramag and senna

Endoscopy Suite

Patient Information
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What preparation will I need for my colonoscopy?

Your bowel must be completely empty of waste material (faeces) for the doctor to have a clear view. If it is not, the procedure may have to be repeated. This leaflet will explain how you would prepare for your colonoscopy examination. You will need to take two different types of laxatives. One laxative is a powder called Citramag and it comes in a sachet. You will need to take 2 sachets. The other laxative is a tablet and is called Senna. You will need to take 10 of these tablets.

These will work together to clean your bowel. You must also follow the special low fibre diet set out in this leaflet. **NB if you feel unable to comply with any of the dietary or medication instructions, please contact the Endoscopy Suite.**

What will the bowel preparation do?

The doctor prescribing the laxatives has assessed you and has identified Citramag and Senna as being the appropriate laxatives for you.

The laxatives are used to make sure that your bowels are cleared of faeces. It will cause you to have more bowel movements than you would usually have. You will need to be near a toilet and therefore we would strongly suggest that you do not go to work when taking them.

You will need to complete the course of laxatives otherwise, your bowels may not be clear enough for the doctor to perform the procedure and it would have to be repeated.

It is a small possibility that the medication could affect you by causing you to develop

- dehydration
- light headedness
- low blood pressure
- kidney problems

It is advised that you should continue to drink clear fluids (refer to page 2), to prevent becoming dehydrated and if you feel light
headed, you could have a glucose drink such as Lucozade sports energy drink.

You may experience stomach cramps with the diarrhoea and this is normal. If you have severe stomach pains or vomiting, take the preparation more slowly (one glass every 30 minutes) until these feelings stop. If they continue, seek medical advice from your GP or contact the Endoscopy Suite. Adult alcohol-free and fragrance-free wet wipes and a soft toilet tissue may help minimize the expected irritation from wiping. You can use a barrier cream such as zinc and caster oil or petroleum jelly (Vaseline) on your bottom to prevent soreness.

**When do I start to prepare for my colonoscopy?**

**Seven days before your procedure:**

- Stop taking iron tablets or any vitamin tablets containing iron - iron makes everything inside your bowel black, making it difficult for the doctor or nurse examining your bowel to see everything.

- Stop taking any laxatives that will cause bulk in your bowels (e.g. Fybogel or Normacol).

**Four days before your procedure:**

- Stop taking any medications that may cause you to become constipated for example lomotil, loperamide (Imodium), or codeine phosphate.

Unless you have been told otherwise, you should continue to take your other regular medicines as usual including on the day of the procedure but with only a little sip of water.

**Two days before your procedure:** Eat food/ drink from the ‘allowed’ section on the following list:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Allowed</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meat, fish, eggs</td>
<td>All meat, poultry, fish and eggs</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starchy foods</td>
<td>White bread, rice, pasta, cous cous, noodles, potatoes (no skins)</td>
<td>Wholemeal, wholegrain and seeded or granary breads or breads containing fruit and nuts including some rotis, chapattis, naan, parathas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Coco Pops, Frosties</td>
<td>Brown rice, wholegrain pasta</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Plain biscuits, e.g. Rich Tea, shortbread, Malted Milk, Gingernuts, Cream Crackers, rice cakes</td>
<td>Porridge, Branflakes, All Bran, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Shreddies, any cereal containing fruit, nuts or oats, wholegrain cereals, e.g. Cheerios</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cake – only if made with white flour</td>
<td>Whole wheat biscuits, e.g. Digestives, Ryvita, oatcakes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Any biscuits containing fruit, nuts or oats, e.g. Garibaldi, Fruit Shortcake, Hobnobs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cakes containing fresh or dried fruit, vegetables, oats or nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and vegetables</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>All fresh, cooked, tinned and dried fruit and vegetables including beans, lentils and pulses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy foods</td>
<td>Milk, plain yoghurt, cheese, ice cream, cream, butter and milky puddings</td>
<td>Any dairy foods containing fruit, nuts or herbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>Fruit juice, squash, sparkling drinks, tea, coffee and coffee based drinks, hot chocolate, Ovaltine, Horlicks</td>
<td>Any drinks with red or purple colouring, e.g. Ribena, Vimto, Red Bull</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have plenty of fluid to drink (aim for 2-3 litres).</td>
<td>Smoothies and fruit juices containing pulp/bits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Chocolate, sweets, spices, salt, pepper, Consommé</td>
<td>Any chocolate or sweets containing fruit, nuts or seeds e.g. sesame snaps, nougat, Florentines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bombay mix or any snack made with chickpea flour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fresh and dried herbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All soups except consommé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Any sweets containing red or purple food colouring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
N.B. If you are taking any nutritional supplements or are on tube feeding, please discuss these with the Endoscopy Suite.

**One day before your colonoscopy:**

At **7am**: Have a good breakfast of foods taken from yesterday’s permitted list.

After this **do not eat any solid food until after your examination but drink plenty of clear fluids**. Examples of clear fluids include: water, tea and coffee without milk, squash/cordial (no juice that is red or purple), fizzy drinks, clear soups (chicken, beef, vegetable), 100% cranberry juice (even though it is red there is no dye in it), clear jelly and boiled sweets.

**10 senna tablets and two sachets of Citramag are enclosed.** These are medicines which will encourage your bowel to empty. Please follow the instructions carefully to make sure your bowel is empty. This is essential for a proper examination.

At **2pm**: Start the bowel preparation as follows:

- Take all 10 senna tablets with plenty of water.
- During the day drink at least a glass of water (about 250ml) or other clear fluid every hour while the effects of the medication persist.

You should expect frequent bowel movements (diarrhoea), often starting within three hours **but sometimes taking much longer**, after the first dose of senna. Some intestinal cramping is normal. You can use a barrier cream such as zinc and caster oil on your bottom to prevent soreness. It is advised that you should stay within easy reach of a toilet once you start taking the medication.

At **4pm**:

- Dissolve the first sachet of Citramag powder in a cup of cold water (approximately 150ml). Stir for two to three minutes and then drink the solution. Sometimes the solution becomes
warm as the Citramag powder dissolves and it may froth up a little. If this happens, wait until it cools sufficiently before drinking it.

At 6pm:

- Dissolve the **second** sachet of Citramag as above and drink the solution.

Oral bowel cleansing agents can cause dehydration. As the laxatives can cause dehydration, you will need to remember to drink at least a glass of water (about 250ml) or other clear fluid every hour while the effects of the medication persist. **If you develop the symptoms of dehydration and cannot increase your fluid intake, then you should seek medical attention.**

These symptoms include:

- dizziness or light headedness on standing up
- thirst
- reduced amount of urine passed

**What about my regular medication?**

- You should continue to take your other regular medicines with a sip of water as usual and on the day of your procedure. You will be informed if you need to stop any of your medication.

- Avoid taking your medications within one hour of taking the Citramag as they may not be properly absorbed.

- Women taking the oral contraceptive should be aware that taking bowel preparation might prevent the absorption of the pill. Additional contraceptive precautions should be taken until the next period begins.

- If you are taking anti-coagulants, such as warfarin or clopidrogrel, or if you are diabetic, you will be given instructions by the nurse, during the telephone pre-assessment. This is usually carried out 7 days before your procedure.
• If you are expecting to have a gastroscopy at the same time as your colonoscopy, you will be given instructions by the telephone pre-assessment nurse 7 days before your procedure.

**Contact details in an emergency**

Telephone your GP surgery or out of hours service (your GP 24 hours number), or else phone or go to your nearest A&E (Accident and Emergency) and then inform the Endoscopy Department at The Royal Marsden.

The Endoscopy Unit is open 08.00 - 17.00 Monday to Friday: 020 7811 8328 or 0207 811 8320.

Outside of working hours you can call the main switchboard number: 020 7352 8171 and ask to speak to the Clinical Site Practitioner at Chelsea.

**If you have any concerns or questions you can contact**

For routine advice, contact the Endoscopy Unit between 8am and 5pm (Monday to Friday): telephone: 020 7811 8328 or 0207 811 8320.

If we are unable to take your call, please leave a message. Answerphone messages will be collected twice daily, Monday to Friday and a member of the Endoscopy Unit will return your call.

**Sources of information and support**

If you would like this information leaflet in a different format, please contact the PALS office on 0800 783 7176 or talk to the clinical staff responsible for your care.

**References**

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre
Freephone: 0800 783 7176
Email: patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk

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