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BOWEL PREPARATION

What is a bowel preparation?

Bowel preparation or bowel “prep” is a process commonly used prior to a colonoscopy, with intention of clearing the bowel content. This is also helpful in laparoscopic surgery as the bowel becomes less distended and easier to mobilise, resulting in more working space in the abdomen and pelvis. More importantly, it increases the safety of your operation.

What is involved with bowel preparation?

Bowel preparation is performed the day before surgery and consists of two components:

1. Ceasing solid foods and only drinking clear fluid
2. A laxative in the form of PicoPrep which can be purchased over the counter

Instructions:

Day before surgery:

You can have a normal breakfast in the morning, however all food and drinks thereafter should be ceased with the exception of clear fluids.

Clear fluids that you can have include:

- Water / Sports drinks / Cordials of any colour/ Jelly / Ice blocks
- Clear fruit juice (eg apple juice/ blackcurrant juice)
- Clear broth / clear soup (strained chicken noodle soup)
- Black tea or coffee (no milk)

At 6pm dissolve the content of one sachet of PicoPrep in a glass (250ml) of warm water and drink it. You should follow this with another glass of water and continue drinking a glass of clear fluid per hour until bedtime. This will help you to remain well hydrated. You will have frequent watery bowel motions after drinking PicoPrep therefore it is highly advisable that you stay at home.

If you need to have major bowel surgery for endometriosis, you will be asked to have an additional sachet of PicoPrep.

Day of surgery:

Fasting time refers to when you need to stop drinking all fluids and is usually 6 hours before surgery. Fasting time is midnight for patients scheduled for surgery in the morning, and 7am after an early “clear fluid breakfast” for patients scheduled for surgery in the afternoon.