

Getting ready for your CT Colonography (CTC) Exam (Also known as CAT scan of the colon)

This guide covers what you need to do to get the best CT exam of your colon. You need to complete all the steps in this guide to have your CT colon exam on its scheduled day.

This guide includes the following:

- How to clean out your bowels prior to the exam.
- A list of items that Massachusetts General Hospital will send you and how to use them.
- A list of items you will need to buy at the store and how to use them.
- A list of foods and drinks that you can have in the days before your exam.
- A list of foods and drinks you **CANNOT** have before your exam.
- A day by day plan you must follow to get ready for the exam.

Please follow this guide to get the best possible CT (also known as CAT) scan exam of your colon. If you cannot do all the steps, you need to call the CT Division at the test site to re-schedule your exam.

Important contact info

- If you have any questions about the preparation instructions, please call the test site.
- If you need to reschedule your exam for any reason, please call **617-724-9729**.
- If you have an urgent concern after normal business hours, please contact your primary care doctors on-call service.
- If you need medical help now, call **911** or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Why proper colon cleaning is needed

Food and liquids can stay in your body for a long time. If there's food still in your system when you get the CT colonography scan, the food can get in the way of seeing any problems that may exist, like tumors.

The doctor will get the best pictures of your colon when it is completely empty. It can take 2 days to completely clean the colon.

If your colon is not completely empty, you will not be able to have the exam. You will need to reschedule the exam and go through the preparation steps again.

Colon cleaning will take place over the 2 days right before your scheduled exam.

Things you will take to help you prepare

We sent you two bottles of liquid with this guide. Instructions for drinking this liquid are detailed below. You will drink this to help with the prep and for a better colon exam.

THESE ARE THE PREP ITEMS THAT YOU NEED TO BUY AT THE STORE:

Bisacodyl 5mg pills

You will be taking 2 tablets in **Step 1 at 9am** of prep day 2.



8.3oz MiraLAX

Mixed with 64oz of fluid. You will be drinking 32oz in **Step 2 at 11am** and the other half during **Step 3 at 5pm**.



THESE PREP ITEMS WILL COME FROM THE PHARMACY WITH YOUR PREP KIT:

1 bottle of Omnipaque 240, 50mL

You will mix this bottle with a large glass (8 ounces) of clear water and drink it. (If you have a known allergy to contrast (x-ray dye) please call the Radiology department at test site).



1 bottle of Barium Sulfate Suspension

You will need to drink **half** of the bottle and discard the rest.



Preparation instructions: day by day

Follow the bowel prep medicine schedule

If you take other medicine, take it 1 hour before or at least one hour after taking the laxative (MiraLAX). You may wish to place the CT Prep Kit in the refrigerator to make the contents more pleasant to drink.

IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

If you have diabetes, call your doctor before starting the colon cleaning prep. You may need to make changes to when you take your insulin medicine or diabetes pills.

Prep day 1

This is 2 days before your exam. Stop eating solid food.

Stop eating solid foods at midnight 2 days before your exam. Eat only soft foods for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks such as:

- Eggs
- Canned fruits and fruits without seeds and skin
- White rice, pasta, white bread, and products made with refined flour
- Any well-cooked vegetables without seeds
- Potatoes without skin
- Tofu
- Ripe banana
- Peeled apple
- Low-fat cheeses
- Low-fat ice cream
- Skim or low-fat milk
- Sherbet
- Plain pudding and custard

Drink plenty of clear liquids up until your exam.

The things you can drink are:

- Gatorade®, Powerade® (sports drinks with electrolytes are recommended to help with hydration)



- Water, tea, or coffee (**no** cream or milk; sugar or honey is okay to add)
- Vitaminwater®, Crystal Light®
- Bouillon or broth (chicken, beef, or vegetable)
- Jell-O®, Popsicles® (**no** fruit or cream added)
- Apple, white grape, or white cranberry juice (**no** orange, tomato, grapefruit, or prune juice)
- Clear soda such as Sprite®, 7-Up®, and ginger ale
- Clear hard candy, gum
- Lemonade (with **no** pulp), iced tea

Prep day 2

This is 1 day before your exam. Follow these instructions on how to take the items in this kit and the laxatives you bought at the store.

Some things to know about prep day 2:

- Stop all solid and soft foods, drink as much clear liquid as you can throughout the day. See Prep Day 1 for the list of liquids you can drink.
- Try to do each step at the times listed below. Plan to stay near a bathroom while you are completing the prep.

PREP DAY 2 STEPS:

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 9am | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 2 Bisacodyl pills with a large glass (8 ounces) of water. The pills will help you move your bowels. Continue to drink clear fluids. |
| 11am | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink 32oz of the MiraLAX solution. This is a laxative. Make sure you are near a bathroom. Continue to drink clear fluids. |
| 5pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink half the bottle of barium sulfate including in your prep kit. You can drink it cold or at room temperature. This is safe to drink and will help us take better pictures of your colon during your exam. • Drink the remaining 32oz MiraLAX mixture. |
| 8pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix the entire bottle of Omnipaque 240 with a large glass of water (8 ounces) and drink it all. Then continue to drink lots of fluid until midnight. |

You are now finished with the colon cleaning prep!

Continue drinking clear liquids and take your medicines as you normally would.

If you have not been able to have a bowel movement or finish the prep kit by midnight of the date of your exam, you will not be able to have the exam. Call the CT Division at test site for coordination.



The day of your exam

You may drive to the hospital yourself or have someone drive you. **Keep drinking clear liquids until your exam.**

IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

If you have diabetes, test your blood glucose level more during colon cleaning prep and on the day of your exam.

- If your level is less than 70 mg/dl or you are feeling the effects of low blood sugar, drink a clear liquid that has sugar in it or take glucose pills.
- We cannot do the exam if you need to eat solid food to get your blood glucose level above 70 mg/dl. However, it is better to get your blood glucose level up than to have the exam. We can always reschedule the exam.

After your exam

After your exam, begin eating your normal diet again. Your referring doctor will review the results and discuss next steps with you.

Medical words used in this guide

Some words in this guide might be new to you. Let's go over what these words mean.

Colon

When food is turned into solid waste in your stomach, the solid waste passes through the colon. The colon removes salt and water from the solid waste. Tumors and other health conditions can affect the colon.

Colonography

A test to look inside the body at the colon to see if tumors or other health conditions are affecting it.

Contrast Agent

When you drink a liquid contrast agent, it highlights the colon on the CT scan.

CT Scan

A type of x-ray.

Laxative

A medicine that makes you move your bowels.

