



Overview

What is Golytely, Nulytely, Trilyte and Colyte bowel preparation?

Golytely, Nulytely, Trilyte, and Colyte are brand names for a medication called polyethylene glycol 3350 with electrolytes. These medications clean out your colon (large intestine) to prepare it for a colonoscopy. They work by softening your poop (stool) so it's easy to have a bowel movement. The electrolytes in the mixture help prevent dehydration.

Why is bowel preparation important?

Preparing for a colonoscopy with a bowel preparation kit is essential. It completely empties your colon of stool. This gives your gastroenterologist the clearest view of the lining of your colon so they can identify polyps or cancer. When your colon isn't completely clear, they can't identify problems, and your colonoscopy results may not be accurate. For your doctor, a clean colon is like driving on a clear, sunny day. A dirty colon is like driving in a rainstorm.

How do I use Golytely, Nulytely, Trilyte and Colyte?

Golytely, Nulytely, Trilyte and Colyte come as powder solutions in a large jug. The day before your colonoscopy, you'll add a specific amount of water

to the jug. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label carefully.

Once you add water to the solution, it creates a **laxative** that you drink. Your colon should be clear by the time you finish drinking the entire jug (if you followed all the instructions correctly).

If you're a Cleveland Clinic patient, you must follow the instructions for bowel preparation exactly as prescribed or your colonoscopy will be canceled.

Key preparation instructions

The following instructions are key to a successful colonoscopy:

- Your bowel must be empty so that your doctor can clearly view your colon. Follow the instructions you get from your gastroenterologist exactly as they are written.
- Don't eat any solid food the entire day before your colonoscopy. Drink only clear liquids.
- Get your bowel preparation kit at least five days before your colonoscopy.

Transportation on the day of your colonoscopy

A responsible adult driver must be with you when you check in before your colonoscopy. They must stay in the waiting area until you're discharged.

You're not allowed to leave alone after your colonoscopy. If you don't have a driver with you to take you home, your exam will be canceled.

Medications

For your safety, certain medications will need to be stopped or adjusted before you can have your procedure. These include:

- **Blood thinners:** Contact your provider at least two weeks before the procedure about adjusting your medication. Examples of blood thinners include clopidogrel (Plavix®), warfarin (Coumadin®), ticlopidine hydrochloride (Ticlid®), anagrelide (Agrylin®), rivaroxaban (Xarelto®), dabigatran (Pradaxa®), apixaban (Eliquis®) and prasugrel (Effient®).
- **Insulin** and diabetes medication: Always call the provider who orders these medications for instructions on changing the dosage leading up to your colonoscopy. Don't take your diabetes pills after midnight on the day of your procedure. If you're taking insulin, like as insulin glargine injection (Lantus®), insulin lispro (Humalog®), long-acting insulin like insulin isophane (HumulinN®, NovolinN®, ReliOn®) or 70/30 insulin, take half your normal dose the day before your procedure.
- **Weight management medication:** If you take medications for weight-loss, your dosage may need to be adjusted, or you might need to stop taking it several days to a week before. Contact the doctor who prescribes this medication for further instructions. Weight loss medications that you'll need to stop include canagliflozin (Invokana®), dapagliflozin (Farxiga®, Forxiga®), dulaglutide (Trulicity®), empagliflozin (Jardiance®), ertugliflozin (Steglatro®), exenatide (Byetta®, Bydureon®), liraglutide (Victoza®, Saxenda®), lixisenatide (Adlyxin®), semaglutide (Ozempic®, Wegovy®, Rybelsus®) and tirzepatide (Mounjaro®, Zepbound®).
- **Iron pills:** Stop taking them one week before your colonoscopy.

Medications like aspirin, antibiotics or diuretics should be taken the day of the exam with a sip of water.

If you're unsure about which medications you can continue to take, please contact your healthcare provider.

Three days before your colonoscopy

Stop eating these high-fiber foods three days before your colonoscopy:

- Popcorn
- Beans
- Seeds (flax, sunflower, quinoa)
- Multigrain bread
- Nuts
- Salad/vegetables
- Fresh and dried fruit

One day before your colonoscopy

You should only drink clear liquids beginning the day before your colonoscopy. Don't eat any solid foods.

You can continue to drink clear liquids until three hours before your colonoscopy. The chart shows what you can and can't drink:

OK to Drink (No Red, Purple or Orange Liquids)

Gatorade or Powerade in yellow, green or blue

OK to Drink (No Red, Purple or Orange Liquids)**DO NOT DRINK**

Alcohol

Clear broth or bouillon**DO NOT DRINK**

Milk or non-dairy creamer

Coffee or tea (no milk or creamer. Sugar and sugar substitutes are OK)**DO NOT DRINK**

Noodles or vegetables in broth

Sodas/soft drinks**DO NOT DRINK**

Juice with pulp

Kool-Aid or other fruit-flavored drinks in yellow, green or blue**DO NOT DRINK**

Liquid you can't see through

Strained fruit juices (no pulp)**DO NOT DRINK**

OK to Drink (No Red, Purple or Orange Liquids)

Jell-O, Popsicles, hard candy (not red, purple or orange)

DO NOT DRINK

Water

DO NOT DRINK

Note: Brand names are registered trademarks.

How to take Golytely, Nulytely, Trilyte or Colyte

Mix the solution the afternoon before your colonoscopy and refrigerate it before drinking. You may add the flavor pack that came with the bowel preparation. Don't add ice, sugar or any other flavorings to the solution.

You'll drink the bowel preparation solution in two parts:

Part 1: 6:00 pm the evening before your colonoscopy

- Drink one 8-ounce glass every 15 minutes (the first half of the solution)
- Return the bowel preparation to the refrigerator

Part 2: Six hours before your colonoscopy

- Drink one 8-ounce glass every 15 minutes (the remaining half of the solution)

- You may continue to drink clear liquids up to three hours before your exam

Some people's bowels move slowly, and they may need different instructions. Please see your doctor for personalized bowel prep instructions if you have:

- Medical conditions that need special accommodations
- Had a poor bowel prep results or failed bowel prep in the past
- Had difficulty with anesthesia during a past procedure

What are possible side effects of Golytely, Nulytely, Trilyte and Colyte?

Bowel prep with polyethylene glycol is safe and effective, but it can cause side effects. Some of those are:

1. Bloating
2. Cramping
3. Nausea or vomiting
4. Burning around your anus

Additional Common Questions

Can I mix Golytely with Gatorade instead of water?

No, you should only mix the solution with water. Carefully read all the directions on the label before you begin to make sure you add the right

amount. (It's OK to drink Gatorade as one of your clear liquids between doses of bowel preparation.) If the taste is unpleasant, many people find sucking on hard candy (not red, orange or purple) helps with the taste.

How long does it take to start pooping after Golytely?

You can have a bowel movement within an hour of drinking the mix.

What if I suffer from constipation?

You may take extra laxatives in the days leading to your prep. This should help resolve your constipation prior to entering the bowel prep day.

What if have had poor preps results in past?

Contact your physician as you'll likely need additional bowel prep instructions.

What if I have motility issues from a medical condition?

Certain medical conditions and medications can slow bowel emptying or lead to constipation. Conditions like Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis (MS) or using a wheelchair can slow down your digestion. Medications like narcotics, gabapentin and anticholinergic medications can also have an impact. Contact your physician and be sure to share your medical history and current medication use, as you'll likely need extra time and additional laxatives to complete your bowel prep.

What if I can't drink large volume of liquid?

Start your prep two to three hours earlier to allow yourself more time to complete the entire prep.

What if I can't finish my bowel prep?

If you can't finish your entire bowel prep, you'll likely need to reschedule your colonoscopy due to poor prep quality.

Do I still have to complete the entire prep if I've had bariatric surgery?

Gastric bypass surgery involves your stomach and small bowel. It doesn't change the length of your colon. You may need to drink smaller amounts, more slowly. You'll need to complete the entire bowel prep, it may just take longer time to complete it.

What if I'm on dialysis?

Please consult your nephrologist prior to scheduling to get instructions that are specific to you. In general, dialysis patients take the Golytely bowel prep and have the procedure same day of their dialysis (colonoscopy in AM, dialysis in PM).

How do I know if something is considered as clear liquid diet?

If you can pour it in a glass and you can see through it, it's considered "clear liquid."

Can I take Uber®, Lyft®, taxi or bus home?

An adult MUST be present with you at check-in for your colonoscopy and remain in the endoscopy area until you're discharged. You can hire a driver to take you home only if this adult escort is with you at check in, remains in the endoscopy area until you're discharged and takes the hired ride home with you.

Can I “sleep it off” here and drive myself home?

No, you must have an adult with you at time of procedure check in. Your responsible adult must remain in the endoscopy center during your procedure and then drive you home. You can't drive a vehicle after your procedure the rest of the day.

A note from Cleveland Clinic

Preparing for your colonoscopy with bowel prep is key to a successful exam. Your provider can better detect polyps and other problems when your colon is completely clear. The directions vary depending on the type and brand of bowel prep you use, and from facility to facility. Don't hesitate to contact your healthcare provider if you have questions about how and when to drink the prep mixture. Not following your healthcare provider's instructions could result in your colonoscopy being canceled.

 **Medically Reviewed.** Last updated on 04/22/2025.

References

Cleveland Clinic's health articles are based on evidence-backed information and review by medical professionals to ensure accuracy, reliability and up-to-date clinical standards.

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