

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

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# Diet and preparation

## Picolax and senna or bisocodyl

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The aim of this leaflet is to help you to prepare for your endoscopy procedure (colonoscopy, flexisigmoidoscopy or enteroscopy). Please read this thoroughly for advice on alterations needed to your diet and administration of bowel preparation medication to clean your bowel in the days leading up to your endoscopy test.

These instructions for **taking** your bowel preparation replace those enclosed in the packets containing Picolax. However, it is important you read the manufacturer's leaflet inside the packet of preparation before you take the bowel preparation. The leaflet will tell you about the preparation itself, such as allergies, indications for taking or not taking the preparation, the possible side effects, the effect it can have on taking oral medications (in particular medications that may affect fluid balance) and when you should consult a doctor before taking the bowel preparation.

Any usual oral medication should be taken at least two hours before starting the Picolax to minimise the risk of flushing the medication through the gut and not being fully absorbed.

The aim of the bowel preparation is to clean your bowel so that there are clear views of the lining of your bowel during your endoscopy procedure. If you are unable to take any of the bowel preparation for any reason or your bowel preparation does not work properly, it is important you contact the Endoscopy Unit using the contact telephone number on your endoscopy appointment letter.

Poor bowel preparation may mean that your endoscopy procedure will be stopped or may not go ahead, and you will need to repeat the preparations and endoscopy test on another day.

We understand we may be asking you to get up early on the day of your test to take your second sachets of bowel preparation.

Research shows that to achieve good views during your endoscopy procedure and reduce the risk of missing lesions or polyps it is best to take the **second part** of your bowel preparation **five hours** before the time of your appointment for your endoscopy test. If you feel it is impossible to get up this early to take your bowel preparation please contact the Endoscopy Unit.

**The remainder of this leaflet advises you on how to prepare in the days leading up to your endoscopy procedure. Please follow the actions below starting seven days before the day of your appointment if you take iron medication, or day four days before for all other patients.**

### **Schedule for preparing for your endoscopy procedure (colonoscopy, flexisigmoidoscopy, enteroscopy)**

Please follow the instructions below, starting seven days before your procedure. Make sure you finish all the Picolax, even if your motions are already liquid and clear.

#### **Seven days before the procedure**

If you are taking iron tablets please stop taking them but continue all other medications including laxatives.

#### **Four days before the procedure**

If you are taking any constipating agents (e.g., loperimide, codeine phosphate etc.) stop taking them. Continue with all other medications until your appointment.

#### **Three to five days before the procedure**

Start a low fibre diet and continue this until you start taking your bowel preparation medication. For the best results in cleansing the bowel a low fibre diet is advised. Eating other foods may affect how well the bowel preparation works to ensure good views of your bowel during your procedure.

#### **The day before the procedure:**

- Take your regular morning medicines unless you have been instructed otherwise.
- Breakfast as usual (using foods from the low fibre diet).
- Lunch no later than 1pm (using foods from the low fibre diet).

Following lunch, even if you are hungry, **do not eat any solid food after 1pm** because this may affect how the bowel preparation works. Your bowel must be completely empty to ensure we have clear views during your endoscopy procedure.

You **should not** eat any further solid food until after your procedure. However, you may drink clear fluids throughout the day. This should preferably be water, but you can also have tonic water, tea or coffee without milk, soft drinks (non-fizzy) including squash (no red or blackcurrant) clear fruit juices without pulp/bits (for example clear apple juice), Bovril.

#### **Not later than 3pm**

Take two senna or biscodyl tablets with a glass of cold water. Continue to drink plenty of clear fluids throughout the day.

#### **7pm**

Make up your **first dose** of Picolax by dissolving one sachet 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 Picolax dissolves. If this happens, wait until it cools sufficiently before drinking it. Following the first dose of Picolax, drink at least five 250ml drinks of clear fluids (preferably water) - at least one glass per hour.

You should continue to drink plenty of clear fluids throughout the day.

You should expect frequent bowel motions and eventually watery diarrhoea. Some stomach discomfort is normal. Please use a barrier cream if your bottom becomes sore and stay within easy reach of the toilet.

### **On the day of your procedure**

Do not eat any solid food until after your procedure.

Make up your **second dose** of Picolax at least five hours before the appointment time of your endoscopy procedure, even if this means you getting up early. Dissolve the second sachet 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 Picolax dissolves. If this happens, wait until it cools sufficiently before drinking it.

For example, if your appointment is:

- 9am - you need to take your Picolax at 4am
- 11am - you need to take your Picolax at 6am
- 3pm - you need to take your Picolax at 10am.

After taking the second dose of Picolax, drink at least five 250ml drinks of clear fluids (preferably water) - at least one glass per hour.

You should continue to drink plenty of clear fluids up until two hours before the procedure, preferably water.

Examples of clear fluids that you may have are water, tea (without milk), coffee (without milk), Bovril, tonic water, squash (no fizzy drinks) (no red or blackcurrant) clear fruit juices without pulp/bits (for example clear apple juice), Bovril.

You should expect to be passing clear fluid bowel motions after taking the second dose of Picolax.



### **After the procedure**

You may eat normally once the examination is over. A high fibre diet (e.g., wholemeal bread, All Bran etc.) will help you restore your normal bowel pattern, which will usually return within a day or two.

## Hints and tips:

- Some people find that drinking the bowel preparation quickly, followed by a small drink of clear apple juice (with no pulp/bits) helps.
- If you feel nauseated while taking the preparation, stop for half an hour before resuming drinking more slowly .
- If you feel bloated, try walking around, suck peppermints or drink peppermint tea.
- **Hydration** is essential for effective bowel preparation - continue to drink plenty of fluids, preferable water.
- Use a barrier cream around your bottom to reduce discomfort.
- Stay near a bathroom.
- If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

If you become ill or have severe abdominal pain, stop taking the bowel preparation and seek medical advice.

## Contact us

If you need to change or cancel your appointment, or you have questions or concerns about preparing your bowel for colonoscopy or the colonoscopy procedure, please contact the Endoscopy Unit (which is open from Monday to Thursday 8am-8pm, and Friday to Sunday, 8am-6pm) using the number on your appointment letter.

## In case of emergency

Please contact the out of hours emergency advice line by dialling 111.

## Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns, or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

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To be completed by the Communications office  
Leaflet code: PIL202309-01-PSB  
Created: September 2023 / Review Date: September 2025