

The ROYAL MARSDEN

NHS Foundation Trust

Bowel preparation for colonoscopy – Citramag and senna

Endoscopy Suite

Patient Information



NHS

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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 explains how you will need to prepare for your colonoscopy examination. You will need to take two different types of laxatives. One laxative is a powder called Citramag which comes in a sachet. You will need to take two sachets. The other laxative is a tablet 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. **If you feel unable to follow 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, therefore we strongly advise 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.

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

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

You should continue to drink clear fluids (see page 2), to prevent becoming dehydrated. If you feel light headed, you may have a glucose drink such as Lucozade sports energy drink.

You may experience stomach cramps with the diarrhoea – 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. Alcohol-free and fragrance-free wet wipes and soft toilet tissue may help minimise the expected irritation from wiping. You can use a barrier cream such as zinc and castor oil or petroleum jelly (Vaseline) on your bottom to prevent soreness.

When do I start to prepare?

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 (such as 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 and drink from the 'allowed' section on the following list:

Food group	Allowed	Avoid
Meat, fish, eggs	All meat, poultry, fish and eggs	None
Starchy foods	White bread, rice, pasta, cous cous, noodles, potatoes (no skins) Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Coco Pops, Frosties Plain biscuits, such as Rich Tea, shortbread, Malted Milk, Gingernuts, Cream Crackers, rice cakes Cake – only if made with white flour	Wholemeal, wholegrain and seeded or granary breads, breads containing fruit and nuts including some rotis, chapattis, naan, parathas Brown rice, wholegrain pasta Porridge, Branflakes, All Bran, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Shreddies, any cereal containing fruit, nuts or oats, wholegrain cereals, such as Cheerios Whole wheat biscuits, such as Digestives, Ryvita, oatcakes Any biscuits containing fruit, nuts or oats, such as Garibaldi, Fruit Shortcake, Hobnobs Cakes containing fresh or dried fruit, vegetables, oats or nuts
Fruit and vegetables	None	All fresh, cooked, tinned and dried fruit and vegetables including beans, lentils and pulses
Dairy foods	Milk, plain yoghurt, cheese, ice cream, cream, butter and milky puddings	Any dairy foods containing fruit, nuts or herbs
Drinks	Fruit juice, squash, sparkling drinks, tea, coffee and coffee based drinks, hot chocolate, Ovaltine, Horlicks Have plenty of fluid to drink (aim for 2-3 litres).	Any drinks with red or purple colouring, such as Ribena, Vimto, Red Bull Smoothies and fruit juices containing pulp or bits
Miscellaneous	Chocolate, sweets, spices, salt, pepper, Consommé (clear soup)	Any chocolate or sweets containing fruit, nuts or seeds such as sesame snaps, nougat, Florentines Bombay mix or any snack made with chickpea flour Fresh and dried herbs All soups except consommé (clear soup) Any sweets containing red or purple food colouring

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 (see page 3).

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 castor 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. We will inform you 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 clopidogrel, or if you are diabetic, your nurse will give you instructions during the telephone pre-assessment. This is usually carried out seven days before your procedure.
- If you are expecting to have a gastroscopy at the same time as your colonoscopy, your pre-assessment nurse will give you instructions by the telephone seven 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 **020 7811 8328 or 020 7811 8320**

(8am – 5pm, Monday to Friday)

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

Contact details (routine)

For routine advice, please contact the Endoscopy Unit between 8am and 5pm (Monday to Friday):

Telephone: **020 7811 8328 or 020 7811 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.

The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline: 020 8915 6899

You can ring the Hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call us straight away if you are feeling unwell or are worried about the side effects of cancer treatments.

This service provides specialist advice and support to all Royal Marsden patients, as well as to their carers, and both hospital and community-based doctors and nurses caring for Royal Marsden patients.

For further information, please visit The Royal Marsden website: www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk/your-care/support-services/royal-marsden-macmillan-hotline

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.

Should you require information in an alternative format, please contact The Royal Marsden Help Centre.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this booklet.

The patient information service is generously supported by The Royal Marsden Charity.

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Registered Charity No.1095197



Revised May 20121. Planned review May 2024
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Radiotherapy and
Chemotherapy Services
F538021 & F538022

