

Frequently Asked Questions – General

Can I choose the location for my procedure?

We will do our best to accommodate your request, but where you will be seen, and whether you can go to an outpatient center or the hospital, will depend on availability and your other medical conditions.

My procedure is in the afternoon. Can I eat in the morning?

No. To ensure your safety during the procedure, it is important that your stomach is empty. Any food or liquid in your stomach at the time of the procedure places you at risk of breathing those contents into your lungs, leading to a serious complication called aspiration pneumonia. You may drink water until four hours before your procedure time.

I have a history of nausea and vomiting with anesthesia and have family who have problems with anesthesia. Do I need any special preparations?

You may need to be referred to the [Inova Pre-Procedural Evaluation Clinic](#) or a visit with the anesthesiologist for clearance. Please mention your history with anesthesia when you speak to the nurse for your presurgical interview.

My rectum is sore from having frequent bowel movements during my bowel preparation. Can I use any medication?

You may apply a petroleum-based lubricant (such as Vaseline) or use any brand of baby wipes for comfort.

What medications can I take the day before and the day of my procedure?

The day before your procedure, take your medications the way you normally would. If you are doing any type of bowel cleansing preparation, be advised that you may undergo a prolonged period of diarrhea, which may flush oral medications out of your system before they have time to take effect. *The morning before your procedure, you should take any blood pressure or heart medications you may be on with a small sip of water.* You can wait to take most other medications until your procedure has been completed. If you have questions about a specific medication, please call a member of our clinical staff.

How many days before my endoscopy should I discontinue my Coumadin, Plavix or other blood-thinning medications?

If you are taking any blood-thinning medications, please let your endoscopist know. Here are some general guidelines:

- If you are taking Coumadin or Plavix, you should stop taking your blood thinner five to seven days prior to your procedure.
- If you are taking one of the newer blood-thinning medicines, you should stop 24 to 48 hours before your procedure.

Check with your endoscopist and your prescribing physician before stopping any blood thinners to ensure it is necessary and safe for you to do so.

I am diabetic. Do I take my insulin?

You should ask the physician who placed you on this medication what to do. Please check your blood sugar the morning of your procedure as you normally would. If you have any questions about your diabetes management in conjunction with fasting before your endoscopic procedure, please talk with your primary care provider.

I am on pain medication. Can I take it prior to my procedure?

Many prescription pain medications can adversely affect the medications we use for sedation. For that reason, we recommend that on the day of your procedure, you delay taking your pain medication until your procedure has been completed. If you have any questions, please call a member of our clinical staff.

I have been on aspirin therapy for my heart. Should I continue to take it?

Yes. Please check with your endoscopist and prescribing physician if you have any questions.

I don't have a ride. Is that okay?

No. If you do not have a responsible adult to accompany you home, **your procedure will be canceled.**

My family does not drive. Can I take a cab/Uber/Lyft/rideshare to the procedure?

You can be dropped off, but a responsible adult has to ride in the cab or rideshare with you when you go home.

Can my family wait for me in the waiting room?

We welcome family to accompany the patient and wait in our waiting room. However, we ask that children stay home and only one adult accompany the patient. (This guideline is subject to change per current [Inova visitation policy](#))

Can I go to work after the procedure?

You will have anesthesia, and we recommend you rest with moderate activity as tolerated for 24 hours. Please see your postoperative instructions for additional information on your limitations.

When can I eat regular food after the procedure?

We recommend you progress slowly to a regular diet. Start with liquids, then try soup and crackers, then gradually work up to solid foods. Avoid heavy, greasy or spicy foods, as they can cause nausea during the initial postoperative period.

Frequently Asked Questions – Colonoscopy specific

I ate breakfast (or lunch or dinner) the day before my colonoscopy. Is that okay?

On the day before your colonoscopy, you cannot eat solid foods. If the colonoscopy preparation instructions are not followed properly, residual stool may remain in the colon and hide important findings from the examining physician. In some cases, if the colon preparation is not good, you may have to repeat the preparation and the exam. *If you accidentally eat any*

solid food the day before your exam, please call and ask to speak with a member of the nursing staff. You may be asked to reschedule your procedure.

I am having a colonoscopy tomorrow. I started my colon preparation on time, but now I am experiencing diarrhea and/or a bloated feeling. What should I do?

Nausea, vomiting, a feeling of fullness or bloating can occur any time after beginning your colon preparation. However, it is important that you drink all the preparation. For most people, taking an hour break from the preparation will usually help. Then continue taking the preparation as ordered. If the vomiting returns or symptoms get worse, please call your physician.

I am having a menstrual period. Should I reschedule my colonoscopy appointment?

No. Your menstrual period will not interfere with your physician's ability to complete your procedure.

May I continue taking my iron tablets?

No. Iron may cause the formation of dark-colored stools, which can make it difficult for the physician to complete your colonoscopy. We recommend you stop taking your oral iron supplements at least one week before your procedure.

Our commitment is to provide the highest level of quality care to our patients.