



Picolax for Afternoon appointments

Bowel Preparation Instructions for Colonoscopy

What is Picolax?

- Picolax is a laxative used to cleanse the lower bowel, also called colon, in preparation for endoscopic procedures.
- It does this by acting on the colon causing a watery bowel motion which evacuates the bowel.
- It is important to have an empty, clean bowel so that the Endoscopist can see it clearly.

Before you take Picolax

- **Do not take Picolax if you have had an allergic reaction to it in the past.** Please inform your hospital Doctor or contact us on the number below if you have this or any other allergies.
- **If you have serious cardiac or renal disorders please contact us immediately, before starting your bowel preparation.**
- **This medicine contains lactose as a component of the flavour.** Patients with rare hereditary problems of galactose intolerance, the Lapp lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption should not take this medicine. Please inform endoscopy Nurses if this is the case.
- You must inform the hospital Doctor if you are pregnant, attempting to become pregnant or breast feeding, before starting your bowel preparation.
- If you are not sure whether you should start taking Picolax or if you do not understand the instructions, please contact the endoscopy department on the following numbers 020 7288 3811/3819 or email whh-tr.endoscopypreassessment@nhs.net



- The success of your examination depends on the bowel being as clear as possible, otherwise the examination may need to be postponed and the preparation repeated.
- **Please read carefully the information inside the Picolax box to be sure you are not allergic to any of the ingredients.**
- **Please make sure you are near a toilet once commencing your Picolax bowel preparation.**

Medication

- Please do not take any iron tablets for **seven days** before the test.
- Fibre supplements (e.g. Fybogel, Regularan, Isphagula Husk) must be stopped three days before the test.
- Anti-diarrhoea medication (e.g. Loperamide, Imodium, Lomotil, Codeine Phosphate) must be stopped three days before the test.

Other medication

- If you are taking oral medicine, do not take it an hour either side of drinking your dose of Picolax.
- If you are taking the oral contraceptive pill then additional precautions should be taken, due to the bowel preparation causing diarrhoea. Please seek advice from your Pharmacist or GP.
- Absorption of other medications may be affected until the diarrhoea caused by Picolax is resolved. If you have any specific concerns about the medications, you take, please discuss with the endoscopy team.
- All other routine medications, including steroids, should be continued, but on the day of the colonoscopy, they may be taken following the procedure, depending on the time the procedure is scheduled.



- If you are taking blood thinners or medication for diabetes, please discuss with endoscopy Nurses as you may need special instructions when taking the bowel preparation.

Diet

- You must start eating a **low fibre diet two days before your procedure.**
- **These are some examples of low fibre foods:**
 - Fats (use sparingly), Butter, margarine
 - Eggs: Boiled, poached, scrambled
 - Cereal: Crisped rice cereal, corn flakes (no bran or wholegrain)
 - Cheese, cream cheese, cottage cheese, cheese sauce
 - Potatoes (no skin or chips): Boiled, creamed, mashed, and baked (flesh part only)
 - Pasta: Plain macaroni, spaghetti, noodles (not whole-wheat)
 - Rice: Plain, boiled white rice
 - Meat/Fish: Minced or well-cooked tender, lean beef, lamb, ham, veal, pork, poultry, fish (no skin), shellfish
 - Gravy: Using stock cubes (white flour or corn flour may be used to thicken)
 - Bread: White bread/toast
 - Soya and tofu
 - Sugar/sweetener: White sugar, brown sugar, and sweetener
 - Dessert: Clear jelly (green and yellow only, not red or blackcurrant)
 - Shredless marmalade or jam



- **Foods not allowed:**
 - All fruits and salad
 - All vegetables (except boiled or mashed potatoes)
 - All nuts and dried fruits
 - Whole meal foods, including brown and multigrain bread, brown rice or brown pasta
 - Pies and pastries
 - Tough, fibrous meat, burgers, sausages
 - Grains, lentils, beans and pulses (including Baked Beans)
 - Porridge, high fibre and multigrain cereals
- **You must not eat any solid food until after the colonoscopy.** During this time, you may only consume clear liquids (see below). You will be offered some refreshments once you are fully awake following your colonoscopy (you can bring your own food if wish to).
- **Examples of clear liquids (i.e., must be transparent, ‘see-through’):**
 - Water
 - Soft drinks, energy drinks, avoid fizzy drinks
 - Fruit squash, Cordials (not blackcurrant)
 - Tea/coffee (black, no milk)
 - Herbal/fruit tea
 - Clear soup (consommé, strained chicken noodle soup, Bovril)
 - Drinks made from stock/meat extract cubes



Taking Picolax for an Afternoon Appointment

- It is essential that you take your medication as instructed below.
- Please note the times may differ slightly from those in the product leaflet.
- Please make sure you follow the dietary advice given above.

The day before your test

- You can eat a **light low fibre breakfast and a light lunch before 4pm. No solid food from this point.**
- **6pm:** Dissolve the contents of one sachet of Picolax in a large glass of water (200ml). Stir for 2- 3 minutes and then **drink the mixture in small sips (in no more than 15 minutes)**. If the mixture becomes hot, allow it to cool sufficiently, then drink.
- Continue drinking **plenty of clear fluids**.

On the morning of your test

- **7am:** Dissolve the second sachet of Picolax in water, and drink as before.
- **Aim to drink at least 2 litres (about 8 glasses) of clear fluids throughout the day.**
- **Continue with clear fluids up to 2 hours before your appointment.**

Possible Side Effects

- **Common:**
 - Tiredness, sleep disorder, headache, nausea
 - Abdominal pain, distension
 - Anal discomfort
 - Thirst, hunger
 - Vomiting
 - Indigestion, feeling generally unwell



- **Uncommon:**

- Dehydration and electrolyte abnormalities
- Allergic reactions, rash, anaphylaxis
- Seizures
- Allergic reactions requiring medical attention are rare.

- If you experience any of the following severe side effects, **stop taking Picolax:**

- **rash and itching**
- **swelling of your face, ankles or other part of your body**
- **palpitations**
- **extreme fatigue**
- **shortness of breath**
- **excessive vomiting**
- **severe abdominal pain**

- Do not hesitate to contact the Endoscopy unit on 020 7288 3811/3819 if you experience any severe side effects, or if you are at all worried. Out of hours, please go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department.
- If you do not have a bowel movement within 6 hours of taking the second sachet of Picolax stop the intake and go to the nearest emergency department.

[Patient advice and liaison service \(PALS\)](#)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Date published: 07/10/2024
Review date: 07/10/2026
Ref: EIM/Endos/PicolaxAftern/01

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