

## Video: Prepare for colon cancer screening with confidence

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A colonoscopy is an exam used to detect changes or abnormalities in the large intestine, or colon, and rectum. It's an important exam that's performed to check for colon cancer. But some would agree that preparing for the colonoscopy is worse than the exam itself.

In this Mayo Clinic Minute, Dr. James East, a gastroenterologist at Mayo

Clinic Healthcare in London, explains what patients will need to do to prepare for this exam and how to make it a little easier.

Before a [colonoscopy](#), your health care provider may ask you to do certain things to empty your colon.

"Colonoscopy prep is a difficult thing, and it probably is the thing that patients like the least about having a colonoscopy," says Dr. East.

Besides following a special, [low-fiber diet](#) in the days leading up to the [exam](#), patients also will be asked to take a liquid laxative prior to their appointment.

"Many of the preps now come in quite a high volume. There may be 2 liters or sometimes even 4 liters to drink," says Dr. East.

A few tricks to help it go down a little easier are to premix it and let it get nice and cold in the fridge. Dr. East says putting some clear citrus flavoring in it helps make it a little more palatable.

Your [health care provider](#) may ask you to use the laxative prep both the night before and the morning of your colonoscopy, which can be tough for some patients. However, it's important to remember "this is your once-in-10-years examination to try and find the polyps that are going to turn into bowel cancer. So, please, if your doctor asks you to split the dose and get up early, this is one of those times an early start is needed," says Dr. East.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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