

YOUR PREPARATION

A colonoscopy can only be performed reliably if your bowel is completely empty and clean. If the bowel preparation is inadequate, the examination will need to be postponed, because:

- the examination may be unclear;
- there is an increased risk of complications.

The preparation is considered adequate when your bowel movements consist of light yellow, clear liquid without any solid particles (similar to weak tea).

Upon arrival at the hospital, you will be asked whether the bowel preparation was successful.

How to prepare

- Obtain Plenvu from your pharmacy (available without prescription).
- If you have previously undergone a colonoscopy and experienced difficulties with the preparation (for example, if you needed to drink additional preparation), please contact our secretariat in advance.

Five days before the examination

- Stop taking iron supplements and charcoal tablets.

Three days before the examination

- Start a low-fibre diet (see Appendix 1).

The day before the examination

You may eat until 4.00 pm, but only the following:

- rusks or white crackers with jam (without pieces or seeds);
- yoghurt or pudding without cereals or fruit;
- clear broth (without vegetables).

Only clear fluids are permitted.

From 4.00 pm onwards, you must not eat anything until after the examination. Clear fluids (water, tea, coffee, fruit juice without pulp, sports drinks, soft drinks) are still allowed.

Between 6.00 pm and 7.00 pm: Plenvu – Step 1

1. Dissolve dose 1 in 500 ml of cold water and stir well.
2. Drink the solution **within 1 hour**, alternating **with at least 500 ml of additional clear fluids** (water, tea, soft drinks, sports drinks).
3. Drink at a **steady, unhurried pace**. Using a straw may help.

It is normal to develop watery diarrhoea within an hour. This may (rarely) be accompanied by abdominal cramps or nausea.

The day of the examination

Three hours before your scheduled hospital arrival: Plenvu – Step 2

1. Drink a glass of water.
2. Wait 10 minutes.
3. **Start with the second dose:** dissolve sachet A + sachet B together in 500 ml of cold water and stir well.
4. Drink this slowly within 1 hour, together with at least 500 ml of additional clear fluids.

Important information regarding medication

- You may take your usual medication, except:
 - **Anticoagulants (blood thinners):** always consult your doctor before stopping these. If you are unsure whether you are taking anticoagulants, see Appendix 2.
 - **Insulin:** halve your morning dose (discuss this with your doctor).
- Take essential medication at least 2 hours after taking Plenvu, to prevent it from being flushed out.
- You must remain fasting, except for permitted clear fluids.

AT THE HOSPITAL

- Report to the reception desk (Route 1) at the time stated in your appointment letter.
This is not the time of the procedure itself, but must be strictly respected to allow sufficient preparation.
- The nurse will discuss whether the bowel preparation was adequate. If not, the examination may need to be postponed.
- Inform the nurse or doctor if you have:
 - allergies;
 - an artificial heart valve;
 - diabetes;
 - previous abdominal surgery.
- You will then be escorted to the examination room.

WHAT TO BRING

- Identification card;
- Referral letter (if applicable);
- Signed consent form (see Appendix 3);
- An up-to-date medication list;
- Spare underwear;
- Something to eat after the examination (or you may use the hospital cafeteria).

THE PROCEDURE

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is an examination in which the doctor inspects the inside of your large bowel using a thin, flexible tube with a camera, inserted through the anus. In some cases, part of the small bowel may also be examined.

You may experience some cramping or bloating during insertion or when navigating sharp bends. This is normal and temporary.

During the procedure, additional interventions may be performed, such as:

- **Polyp removal:** removed tissue can be examined in a laboratory. This is painless. Rarely, minor bleeding may occur and will be treated immediately.
- **Biopsies:** painless tissue samples.

Complications are very rare and, if they occur, are usually easily treated.

Possible complications include:

- reaction to medication;
- minor bleeding after polyp removal;
- a small tear in the bowel wall;
- inflammation following polyp removal.

SEDATION

To ensure your comfort, the procedure is performed under sedation.

In most cases, this is administered by an anaesthetist using propofol, a short-acting sedative that allows you to sleep during the procedure, feel no pain, and wake up quickly and clearly, with no memory of the examination.

In specific situations (for example, if you previously tolerated conventional sedation with midazolam and alfentanil well), this method may still be used, following consultation with your treating physician. Conventional sedation may cause drowsiness afterwards, and information given post-procedure may not be fully remembered.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- You will rest briefly.
- A nurse will accompany you to a consultation room.
- The doctor will discuss the results with you.
- You will receive a written report for your GP (also sent electronically).
- We advise eating a small snack to avoid light-headedness; you may then resume a normal diet.
- The following day, all medication effects will have worn off and you may resume normal activities.

You must not drive for the rest of the day. Please arrange transport home. Reception staff can arrange a taxi if needed, or you may use public transport.

When to seek medical advice

Contact your GP if you experience:

- severe abdominal pain;
- fever;
- bloody stools.

Cancellation

If you wish to cancel your examination, please notify us at least three days in advance by calling +32 16 20 91 23 or +32 16 20 92 09.

APPENDIX 1 – LOW-FIBRE DIET

Allowed:

- white bread, rusks, white pasta or rice;
- cornflakes (without fruit or nuts);
- clear broth or blended soup;
- lean meat and fish;
- dairy without pieces, nuts or rind (yoghurt, pudding, soft cheeses);
- eggs;
- plain Quorn, tofu or seitan;
- tinned peaches, pears or apricots in juice or syrup;
- clear fluids: water, tea, coffee, soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit juice without pulp.

Not allowed:

- wholegrain products and potatoes;
- vegetables;
- nuts, seeds, dried fruit;
- fresh fruit or fruit with pulp or seeds;
- fatty, spicy, fried or breaded foods;
- pulses;
- processed meat substitutes.

If in doubt, avoid the food until after your examination.

APPENDIX 2 – MEDICATION

Anticoagulants (blood thinners)

IMPORTANT: If you take anticoagulants, always inform your GP, cardiologist or neurologist that you are undergoing a colonoscopy. You may need to stop these medications only on medical advice.

If anticoagulants cannot be stopped due to high risk, the examination may proceed but no therapeutic interventions can be performed.

Examples include: acetylsalicylic acid (e.g. Asaflow®, Cardioaspirin®, Aspirin®);

- Marcoumar®
- Marevan®
- Sintrom®;
- Plavix® Clopidogrel® Ticlid®, Brilique®,
- Efient®;
- Xarelto®, Pradaxa®, Eliquis®, Lixiana®.

Other medication

- Insulin: halve the morning dose on the day of the examination.
- Other medication may be taken unless advised otherwise.
- Take essential medication **2 hours after Plenvu.**

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Patient name:

Date of birth: ... / ... /

1. I hereby give explicit consent for a colonoscopy to be performed at Heilig Hart Regional Hospital Leuven by on ... / ... /
2. I have been clearly and comprehensively informed about my medical condition, diagnosis and the procedure, including:
 - purpose, nature, urgency, duration and frequency;
 - expected course and aftercare;
 - contraindications, side effects and risks;
 - possible alternatives.I have read the colonoscopy information leaflet and understand that I must not drive or operate machinery on the day of the procedure.
3. I understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise during or after the procedure, requiring changes to the planned treatment. I consent to any necessary measures to ensure optimal care.
4. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and received satisfactory answers. I understand that I may withdraw consent at any time. I consent to clinical photographs or images being taken for inclusion in my medical record and for scientific purposes only.
5. I give my informed and voluntary consent for the planned procedure, in collaboration with medical and paramedical staff.

The form must be signed and returned to the physician or the admitting nurse no later than the time of the procedure, so that it can be added to the patient's medical record.

Signed in Leuven on ... / ... /

Signature of patient or legal representative
(to be mentioned: "read and approved")

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