



## Endoscopy Unit

# Bowel Preparation Instructions for Colonoscopy Appointments (Picolax)

## A patient's guide

This booklet contains the instructions you must follow to have your bowel cleaned for a Colonoscopy appointment.

Please bring this booklet with you to your appointment



## Introduction

### What Picolax is used for?

Picolax is used to cleanse the lower bowel 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.**

You must inform the 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 hospital switchboard on **020 7272 3070** and ask for **bleep number 2711** from Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:30 or alternatively contact your doctor.

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, Regulan) 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.

### Anticoagulants

If you are on blood-thinning treatment (e.g., Warfarin, Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor, Apixaban, Dabigatran or Rivaroxaban) please contact the hospital switchboard on **020 7272 3070** and ask for **bleep number 2711**, Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:30 or alternatively contact your doctor, as special arrangements may need to be made for you.



### Diabetes medication

If you have diabetes that is controlled by insulin or tablets, you will be given a separate advice sheet explaining how to take these medications whilst fasting for your procedure. Please ensure the Endoscopy Unit is aware you are diabetic, so that your appointment can be made at the beginning of the list.

### Other medication

All other routine medication, 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 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.

## Diet

The success of the colonoscopy depends on your colon being completely clean. One day before starting your preparation please follow a low fibre diet: i.e. avoiding foods such as fruit, vegetables, brown bread, brown pasta and high fibre breakfast cereals.

### Low fibre foods

A low fibre diet must be followed two days before the procedure you take the bowel preparation.

#### **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

Once you started taking the Picolax, **you cannot 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 the Picolax

It is essential that you take the two doses of medication given to you 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.

#### Morning Appointment

If you have a morning appointment, start taking the Picolax **the day before**, as follows:

**12-12.30pm** – Liquid lunch (e.g., consommé, strained chicken noodle soup, Bovril). **Clear Fluids only. No solid food from this point.**

**1pm** - Drink plenty of fluids (a large glass of water, fruit squash or a large cup of tea or coffee).

**2pm** – Dissolve the contents of one sachet of Picolax in a cup or a large glass of water of water (200ml). Stir for 2- 3 minutes and then drink the mixture in small sips (in no more than 15 mins). If the mixture becomes hot, allow it to cool sufficiently then drink.

**2-6pm** – Drink plenty of fluids every hour. **Aim for at least two litres (about 8 to 10 glasses) in total throughout the day.**



**6pm** – Dissolve the second sachet of Picolax in water and drink as before.

**7pm** – Diet supper: Clear soup or Bovril only. No solid food. Continue to drink plenty of fluids.

### **On the morning of your test**

**6-7am** - Continue with clear fluids only.

### **No solid food until after your appointment**

### **Afternoon Appointment**

If you have an afternoon appointment, start taking the Picolax the **day before**, as follows:

Continue to follow a low fibre diet until 4pm.

**4pm - Clear Fluids only. No solid food from this point.**

Drink plenty of fluids every hour. **Aim for at least two litres (about 8 to 10 glasses) in total throughout the day.**

**6pm** – Dissolve the contents of one sachet of Picolax in a cup or a large glass of water of water (200ml). Stir for 2 - 3 minutes and then drink the mixture in small sips (in no more than 15 mins). If the mixture becomes hot, allow it to cool sufficiently then drink.

**7pm** – Continue to drink fluids.

**7-8pm** - Diet supper: Clear soup or Bovril only. No solid food. Continue to drink plenty of fluids.

### **On the morning of your test**

**7-8am** - Dissolve the second sachet of Picolax in water and drink as before

**8m** – Drink plenty of fluids.

### **No solid food until after your appointment.**

**Drink at least a glassful of water (clear fluid) every hour while you are awake. It is better to avoid alcohol while you are on the Picolax treatment plan (as alcohol causes dehydration).**

**Remember:** it is normal to get diarrhea when you take Picolax.



## Possible Side Effects

### Common:

- Tiredness, sleep disorder, headache, nausea
- Abdominal pain, distension
- Anal discomfort
- Thirst, hunger
- Vomiting
- Dyspepsia.

### Uncommon:

- Dehydration and electrolyte abnormalities
- Allergic reactions, rash, anaphylaxis
- Seizures

Allergic reactions requiring medical attention are rare. Do not hesitate to contact your doctor if you experience any severe side effects, or if you are at all worried.

You may experience tiredness, headache, nausea and stomach pains. This is normal. Continue to take Picolax unless you feel unable to do so.

If you experience severe vomiting and/or severe abdominal pain, stop taking Picolax and report it to your doctor.

## Final Checklist

- |                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| ✓ Low fibre diet | ✓ 4 L of clear fluids        |
| ✓ No solid food  | ✓ Yellow, light clear stools |
| ✓ Picolax taken  | ✓ Escort.                    |

### **Congratulations, you are ready for your procedure.**

**To contact the Whittington Health's Endoscopy Unit: dial 020 7288 3811 / 3812  
or 020 7272 3070 – Bleep 2711**

### 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.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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