



## Bowel Preparation for Surgical Patients

### *What is a bowel preparation?*

- A bowel preparation is when a solution is given to you/your child through a nasal gastric tube (NGT) in order to clear the bowel of formed stool.
- An NGT is a long, thin flexible tube, which enters one nostril into the nose and extends into the stomach.

### *Why is it necessary?*

- A bowel cleanout is done to prepare you/your child for surgery.
- The bowel is considered "clean" when clear fluid without pieces of stool passes from the rectum or the ostomy.
- If the bowel is not clean and there is stool in the intestine, then the surgeon may not be able to perform the surgery.
- You/your child will be admitted to the hospital the day before scheduled surgery for the bowel clean out.

### *What happens before your child comes to the hospital?*

- Approximately one week before you/your child is scheduled to come to the hospital, you will receive a call from one of the nurses in the outpatient clinic. You may have already met this nurse on Fegan 3 during your visit with the surgeon. She will review what you/your child may eat or drink in the days before you come to the hospital. This information will also be mailed to you. She will also discuss the bowel preparation and expectations for the day before surgery.
- We recommend strongly that your child be told the details of the process (based on his/her age) regarding the bowel prep. With older children, we would like to speak directly to them to answer their questions.
- The day before surgery will be a very long day with many procedures involved.
- The admitting office will call you 24-48 hours before your child's admission to notify you of the time you should bring your child to the hospital.
- If your insurance has changed since the time the operation was scheduled, you will need to call the PAC (Patient Access Center, 617-355-6387) before your child is admitted.

### *Day of Admission to the Hospital*

- The day you/your child is admitted to the hospital, you will need to go to the Admitting office (located in the Main Bldg., Floor 1) to get a hospital card, name band and fill out some paperwork. You should expect to be in admitting for approximately 15 minutes.
- After you are finished in the admitting office, you will then be instructed to go to Fegan 3. You/your child will be weighed and measured, and will briefly meet with a nurse practitioner. She will review with you what to expect during the hospitalization. You will then be directed to the inpatient unit.

### ***Admission to hospital unit***

- When you/your child is admitted to the inpatient unit there are many procedures that will be necessary in order to proceed with the bowel cleanout.
- You and your child will meet many people during the course of the day.
- A nurse will ask you some questions about your/your child's medical history. You/your child will have an IV placed and their blood drawn.
- They will then have a NGT (Nasogastric tube) placed by a nurse.
- If your child is breastfed he/she may continue breastmilk until time of admission to inpatient unit. At that time he/she will need to start a clear liquid diet.

### ***How is the tube insertion done?***

- The nurse will bring you/your child to the treatment room for placement of the NGT.
- A small-lubricated tube will be inserted into one nostril, through the esophagus (food pipe) and then into the stomach.
- You/your child will be awake during this procedure (it is not safe to sedate you/your child for this). You/he/she may cough or gag during the insertion.
- You/he/she will then have a solution called Golytely put through the NGT. The Golytely may take 4-8 hours to go through the NGT.
- You/your child will have many bowel movements 30 – 45 minutes after starting the solution.
- You/your child will be able to continue a clear liquid diet during this time.
- You/your child may have some enemas to help clear you/him/her out. An enema is placed in your/your child's rectum or stoma.

### ***When is the bowel preparation complete?***

- The bowel prep is complete when the bowel movements are free of stool.

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A [Spanish](#) version of this is available from your provider

Send comments or questions to: [Familyed@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:Familyed@childrens.harvard.edu)

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