

## **PRE-OPERATIVE BOWEL PREP**

YOUR PHYSICIAN HAS ORDERED A BOWEL PREPARATION PRIOR TO YOUR SURGERY, AS A MEANS TO CLEANSE YOUR BOWEL. IT IS IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO ENSURE ADEQUATE PREPARATION FOR SURGERY AND AVOID POSSIBLE DELAYS OR CANCELLATION OF YOUR SURGERY.

Individual response to laxatives varies. This prep causes multiple bowel movements. It will usually work within 30 minutes, but it may take as long as 3 hours. During this time, please remain close to bathroom facilities. You should not be taking any aspirin or similar medications, arthritis medications, or blood thinners within 7 days of your surgery unless otherwise instructed by your physician. Any other medication may be taken as long as it does not coincide with drinking this prep. The day before surgery starting at 12:00 noon, drink only clear liquids; do not eat any solid food, milk, or products containing milk.

### **Fleet Phosphosoda**

Please read all the instructions you were given. Buy two 1-1/2 ounce bottles of Fleets Phosphosoda at your drugstore or pharmacy. If only the 3 ounce bottle is available buy just one. At 5:00PM mix 1 1/2 fl oz of Fleets Phosphosoda with 1/2 glass (4 oz.) of water and drink. Immediately follow this with one full glass of water. Repeat this step at 6:00 PM. You may continue to drink water until midnight. Do not eat or drink or smoke after midnight.

### **Clear Liquid Diet**

Water

Fruit juices

Clear broth or bouillon

Coffee or tea without cream

Gatorade

Carbonated beverages

Kool-Aid

Plain Jell-O

Popsicles

Or any other liquid that you can see through

# How to Survive Bowel Prep

Tips from those who have endured it before...

## When it's needed

In many instances, a complete "bowel prep" the night before surgery is required for gynecologic surgery. Complications can occur with an inadequate bowel prep, so you'll want to make sure you follow your doctor's directions precisely. A bowel prep cleanses the bowel so that surgery can be performed safely, and usually includes a liquid diet and various preparations to empty your bowels. This is not a pleasant process, but it is necessary.

## How to Survive

Many of us have endured this process before you, and here is what we have learned:

1. Prepare yourself mentally! Decide you're going to do it, and just do it!
2. Eat lightly a couple of days before the bowel prep. Eat more fruit and green vegetables and reduce meat and dairy products. This will make it easier for your bowels to empty.
3. Some find that the mixtures taste best if ice cold. One way to cool it quickly is to put it in the sink with ice all around it. You may also want to squeeze a bit of lemon juice into the mixture.
4. You may want to drink the mixture through a straw so the taste goes as far back in your mouth as possible. Drink it as fast as you can.
5. As soon as you have drunk the mixture, follow up with something strong tasting, such as your favorite flavored chewing gum, hard candy or a spoonful of chicken broth to get the taste out of your mouth. Make sure whatever you follow up with is on your physician's list of approved liquids.
6. At some point the mixture will begin to "work". This may take some time. It seems to help things along if you drink approved liquids in

between the "cocktails". Liquids such as ginger ale, chicken broth, lemonade, apple juice, are usually the most appealing. Remember to check with your physician for a list of what liquids are allowed.

7. Use baby wipes to wipe your bottom. Get the all natural, alcohol free, aloe vera, unscented variety. These will really save your bottom once you begin going often.
8. If you have a tendency to develop hemorrhoids, be sure to have a hemorrhoid cream on hand. It contains a little bit of "local anesthesia" to ease the discomfort. Even if you do not have hemorrhoids, you may want to have a zinc oxide ointment, such as Destin, available to apply to what may become your tender bottom. You'll be happy you did so.
9. If you feel yourself getting sick after drinking the umpteenth glass, try holding a sachet pillow to your nose, or a handkerchief scented with your favorite perfume or essential oil. If other drinks are allowed, try a slice of fresh ginger in some boiling water (ginger helps relieve nausea).
10. Prepare the bathroom for your adventure. You will be spending a lot of time in there. Clean it if you think the corner fuzz balls will make you crazy after a while. Make it cozy with a bunch of flowers or some nice, candles.
11. Stock up on your favorite, easy to read books and magazines. You will need something to pass the time with.
12. Station yourself near the bathroom. Make yourself a little nest that's a short, dash to the bathroom. Have near you the TV, your books and a magazine, your bowel prep cocktail, other approved liquids, pillows, and blankets. The urge to go will strike suddenly and without much warning, so be prepared for this little adventure by doing some advanced planning. And try to make sure you don't have to share the bathroom with others during this time.

**Good Luck! And remember: many have gone before you and survived!**