

# Colonoscopy

*Rehearsal Guide...  
preparing people with intellectual and  
developmental disabilities (I/DD) to  
successfully complete a colonoscopy*

## INTRODUCTION FOR CAREGIVERS

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self advocates to improve their health outcomes.

## HOW TO USE THIS REHEARSAL GUIDE

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure is to take place, perhaps the day before or the morning of the procedure. It is up to the caregiver to determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and on the individual's abilities.

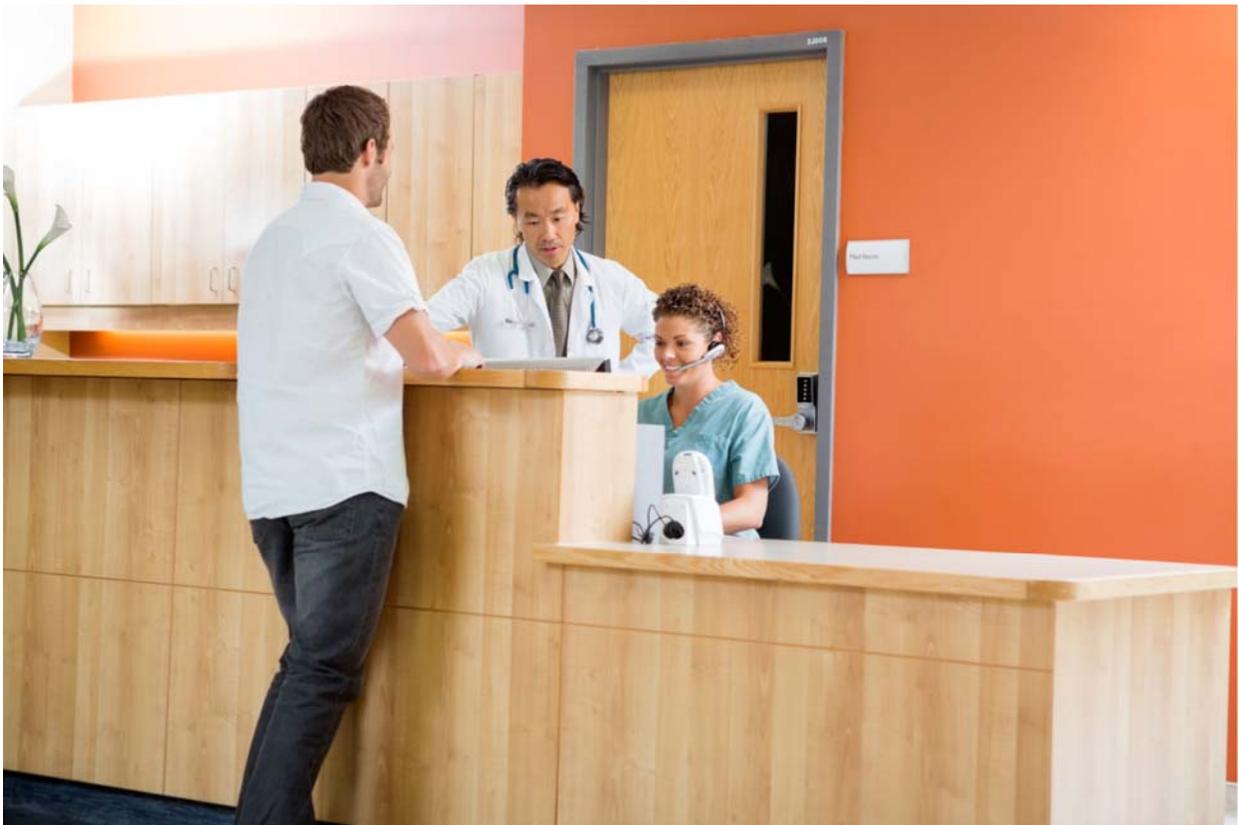
It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. A caregiver may want to share experiences in regards to having this procedure done personally, but be sure to do so in a positive manner, depicting a positive outcome.

### For best practices:

- Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure. Review each page step by step.
- Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- Remember to offer positive reinforcement and praise throughout the procedure, especially after the individual has successfully completed the procedure.

## INTRODUCING THE PROCESS

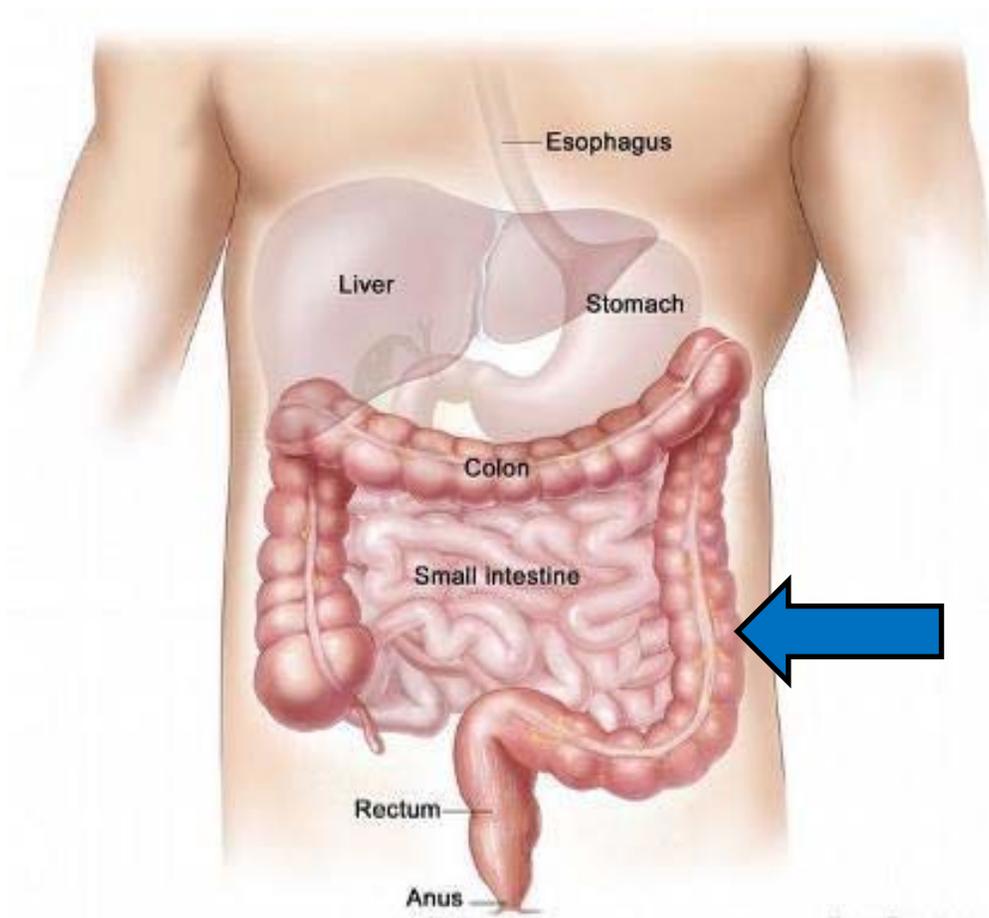
*(Name of the individual)*, you are going to have a test called a **colonoscopy** on *(insert date here)* at *(name of location)*.



## INTRODUCING THE PROCESS

The doctor ordered this test to check the inside of your body in an area called the colon. The colon is the area in your body that holds your bowel movements or poop.

Special pictures will be taken for the doctor to see if your colon is okay. The arrow is pointing to the colon—it's that big pink tube in the body.



## THE DAY BEFORE THE TEST

The doctor does not want you to eat anything the day before the test because your colon needs to be empty and not have any BM or poop in it.

The pictures of the inside of your colon will be seen better if there is no poop in it.



## THE DAY BEFORE THE TEST

Even though the doctor does not want you to eat anything the day before the test, you will be allowed to drink—but only clear liquids.

Clear liquids are drinks like coffee, tea, water, broth, and sports drinks but nothing RED. Your doctor will give you a list of other drinks you will be allowed to drink.



## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE TEST

The night before the test the doctor will order a special drink.  
Be sure to try to drink all of it.

The drink will make you have to go to the bathroom and  
poop. You will have to poop many times; this is normal.

The doctor wants you to poop so your colon is empty and  
clean.



## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE TEST

The drink might give you stomach cramps. This is normal. You might have to stay close to the bathroom so you don't have an accident.

If you do have an accident, don't worry. This happens to many people. We will help you get cleaned up and change your clothes.



## THE MORNING OF THE TEST

The morning of the test your doctor might order something else for you to take before the colonoscopy test.

Remember the doctor does not want you to eat breakfast.  
We know you are going to be hungry but don't worry.  
After the test is done you will be able to eat.

Try to relax until it's time to leave for your test.

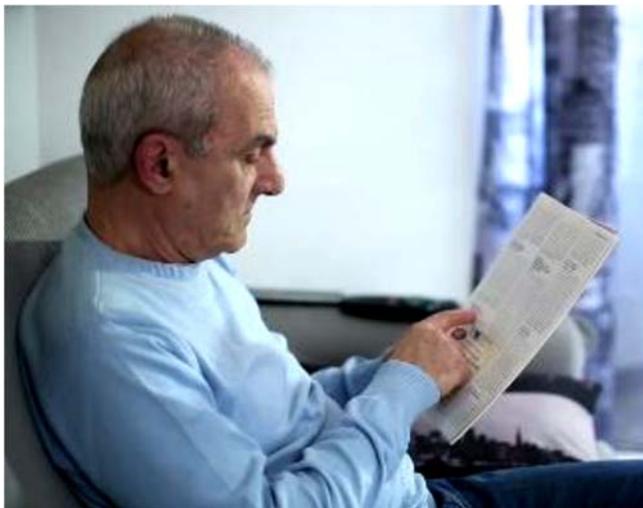


## IN THE WAITING ROOM

When you first get to your appointment, you will have to wait until someone calls your name.

(Name of caregiver) will stay in the waiting room with you.

Would you like to take something to read or listen to music while you wait?



## CHANGING INTO A PATIENT GOWN

There will be people who will tell you what you need to do. These people are there to help you.

These people will tell you that you need to take off all of your clothes, put them in a bag, and put on a patient gown before the pictures are taken. You will be able to put your clothing in the changing room.

It is okay to listen to these people, and (name of caregiver) will be right there with you to make sure that you are all right.



**Note to Caregiver:** You may want to reassure the person that the dressing room is private.

## GETTING READY

The person who works with the doctor will be with you during the colonoscopy and will help you lay down on a bed. The person will help you lay down on your left side.

*(Name of caregiver)* may have to wait in the waiting room when the pictures are taken.

If so, *(name of caregiver)* will be with you as soon as the test *is over.*



**Note to Caregiver:** Practice laying down on the left side. Caregivers might try contacting the physician's office or the x-ray department to ask if a caregiver is permitted to stay with the person until asleep.

## GOING TO SLEEP

Someone at the testing place will put a small needle in your hand or arm. It will feel like a little pinch on your arm or hand. Try to lay still for this. You can take some deep breaths to help you relax.

The small needle in your arm or hand will be hooked to a long tube. This is called an IV. This is how you will get the medicine that will make you go to sleep.



***Note to Caregiver:*** Encourage individual to practice taking some deep breaths.

## AFTER YOU GET THE MEDICINE

After you get the medicine, you will go to sleep.

While you are sleeping the doctor will do the test. You won't feel anything because you will be asleep.

When you wake up, the test will be all done!



## WHEN THE TEST IS OVER

After you wake up,  
you might feel a little tired.

(Name of caregiver) will be sitting by your bed.

A nurse will be there to take care of you, too.



## ALMOST DONE

When you are able to sit up again,  
the nurse will offer you something to drink.

He or she will ask if you want pop, juice, or water.

When you finish your drink,  
you will be ready to get dressed and go home.



**GREAT JOB! I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT!**

See how easy it is to have a colonoscopy?  
It's *that* simple!

I know you can do it! You always do a great job!



**Note to Caregiver:** *This is a good place to assess how well the person understood what was presented. Ask some very brief questions such as, “Do you know what will happen when you go to have the colonoscopy?” Revisit the story as often as needed to ensure the person understands and is prepared when the day of the test arrives.*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Great Ormond Street Hospital. (2015, May). Colonoscopy. Retrieved from <http://www.gosh.nhs.uk/medical-information-0/procedures-and-treatments/colonoscopy>
- North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN). (n.d.). Colonoscopy for Kids. Retrieved from <https://www.gikids.org/files/documents/digestive%20topics/english/Colonoscopy%20for%20kids.pdf>



For additional information regarding this guide or  
any of our physical or behavioral health trainings,

contact

KEPRO SW PA Health Care Quality Unit  
(KEPRO HCQU)

[hcqu.kepro.com](https://hcqu.kepro.com)