

Radiology Department

# Bowel preparation (Epsom Salts) for a small bowel examination

## Information for patients



## Bowel preparation instructions

The bowel must be empty and free of waste matter to allow the doctor to see it clearly. To do this you must take a bowel preparation called Epsom Salts (Magnesium Sulphate powder). The enclosed Epsom Salts must be taken:

### **the day before your appointment at 5pm.**

This preparation will result in loose motions, which can begin as soon as three hours after taking the Epsom Salts. It is therefore important to remain close to the toilet.

## How to take Epsom Salts

Measure two heaped 5ml spoonfuls (spoon provided) of Epsom Salts and dissolve these in 40ml of cold tap water (this is approximately a quarter of a tea cup). Stir well to dissolve. The solution may become warm – wait until it has cooled down before drinking. Drink the solution. Rinse the cup with a little cold tap water and drink to ensure you take the whole dose required.

The pack of Epsom Salts contains more powder than you will need, so throw the remaining powder down the toilet.

## Diet

As well as taking the Epsom Salts you must also follow the diet instructions below on the day before your appointment:

### **BREAKFAST 8.00am-9.00am**

Eat **one** of the following:

- 30g Rice Krispies or cornflakes with up to 100mls milk, **or**
- 2 slices white bread or toast with a thin layer of butter/margarine and/or honey if desired, **or**
- 1 boiled or poached egg with 1 slice of white bread or toast as above, **or**
- 50g cottage or cream cheese with 1 slice of white bread **or** toast as above

Plus tea / coffee (with milk/sweeteners as required) **or** water **or** clear fluids (for example: Fruit squash, Bovril, Lemonade).

### **MID-MORNING DRINK**

Tea or coffee (with milk / sweeteners as required) **or** water **or** clear fluids.

### **LUNCH 12.00 noon-1.30pm**

Choose **one** of the following:

- 75g of meat (e.g. lean beef, lamb, ham, veal, pork **or** poultry, with gravy) or fish or shellfish, **or**
- 2 boiled or poached eggs, **or**
- 100g cream **or** cottage cheese **or** cheese sauce

and one of the following:

- 2 slices white bread or toast with a thin layer of butter or margarine, **or**
- 2 small (egg-sized) potatoes, with the skin removed, with small amount of butter or margarine, **or**
- 2 tablespoons plain white rice **or** pasta

Plus **black** tea /coffee, water **or** clear fluids

### **AT 5 PM**

Take two heaped 5ml spoonfuls of Epsom Salts as instructed above.

### **SUPPER 7pm-9pm**

#### **No solid food allowed**

- Clear soup or drinks made from stock or meat extract cubes
- Clear jelly for dessert

Plus **black** tea /coffee, water or clear fluids

**No further solid food, milk or dairy products are allowed until after the procedure the next day.**

## **HAVE NOTHING TO EAT OR DRINK ON THE MORNING OF THE EXAMINATION.**

You must continue to drink clear fluids until bowel movements have stopped. It is important to make sure that you drink enough fluid to satisfy your thirst. This will also help to avoid dehydration and headaches. **Drink clear fluids, preferably water or tea, coffee, squashes, strained fruit juice, herbal/fruit teas, clear soups or drinks made from stock/meat extract cubes e.g. Oxo/Bovril.** Tea or coffee after lunch should be black. Thereafter drink enough clear fluids to satisfy your thirst until after the procedure.

You may wish to bring a drink and a snack to eat after the examination has finished. Alternatively, you can visit the hospital restaurant.

## Questions

If you have any questions about these instructions, please telephone the number on the front of your appointment letter.

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

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