

Does the Timing of Laxatives Make a Difference in Colonoscopy Prep Outcomes?

Douglas J. Sprung, MD, GI, The Gastroenterology Group, Maitland, FL*

Purpose: To compare the outcomes of beginning the same Fleets phospho-soda (FPS) colonoscopy preparation in the morning versus the evening.

Methods: 100 patients were prospectively randomized to either beginning their FPS prep at 8 am (group A) or 5pm (group B). Each group took 2 doses of 1.5 ounces of FPS and a liquid diet for 24 hours before the colonoscopy. Group A took FPS at 8 am and 3pm, group B at 5pm and 9pm. The FPS was mixed in fluids of their choice. There were 50 patients in each group. There was a single physician observer who performed all the colonoscopies.

Results: In group A patients felt their prep was poor 4%, fair 10%, and good 86% of the time, while the observer felt the prep was poor in 4%, fair in 20%, good in 54% and excellent in 22%. 48% complained of nausea with the prep, and 60% complained of a bad taste. In group B 100% felt their prep was good, whereas the observer felt it was poor in 8%, good in 16% and excellent in 76%. 36% complained of nausea and 92% complained of a bad taste. 78% defecated an average of twice after midnight.

Conclusions: 1. Beginning a FPS prep later in the day yielded a significantly better colonic preparation, especially of the right colon. Patients were able to work the day before the procedure thereby avoiding lost revenue or vacation time. 2. No serious clinical complications occurred in this prospective study due to FPS. 3. The main disadvantage of the later prep time is the likelihood of having to defecate during the night.