

## ***Bowel Cancer Screening Programme***

### **PICOLAX TREATMENT**

### **Information for patients**

### **AFTERNOON**

### **appointments**

**Please follow the instructions in this leaflet instead of the manufacturer's instructions, the time of your appointment has an influence on what you can and cannot eat & drink**

Reviewed: 08/03/2021, 13/06/2023

Reviewed by: Christine Jolly Bowel Cancer Screening Programme

Further 1 year review given 16/09/2024 Trustdocs ID 11130 Approved by PIF

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**This medicine is for you and must not  
be passed on to anyone else**



## Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is a quick reference guide for patients taking Picolax and should be read in conjunction with the manufacturer's guidance supplied with your medicine. It is intended to provide a useful summary of the key issues. If you have any questions please speak to your pharmacist, GP or hospital nurse/doctor who will be able to advise you.

## What is Picolax?

Picolax is a preparation used to clear the bowel before some investigations and/or surgery. It comes as a powder that when mixed with water makes a solution, which you are then able to drink as instructed.

It works by increasing the activity of the bowel and also by holding water in the bowel, which helps to wash it out.

**Do not take Picolax if you have had an allergic reaction to it in the past.** Please inform your hospital doctor or contact one of the numbers given on this advice sheet if you have this or any other allergies.

Please discuss any medical problems you may have with your hospital doctor or GP before taking Picolax. Although you will be seen by a doctor before you are prescribed Picolax they may not be fully aware of any problems you have.

You must inform the doctor if you are pregnant, attempting to become pregnant or breast feeding.

**If you are a diabetic** it is important that you discuss your management with your GP, hospital doctor or your diabetic team. Please do not start Picolax before you have done this. There is a fully informative instruction leaflet in the Picolax packet.

## How to store Picolax

- Keep out of sight and reach of children
- Store in the original package and at a cool temperature (not in a fridge)
- Do not take the medicine after the date of expiry marked on the packet

Return all old and unused medicines to the pharmacist.

## How to take Picolax

Two doses (sachets) are normally taken, 6 to 8 hours apart the day before your procedure. The exact time depends on when your appointment is scheduled, e.g. morning or afternoon. There is a separate "Picolax Treatment Plan" in this leaflet which details when you should take Picolax and what foods you are allowed/not allowed. Please follow the instructions carefully.

Picolax should always be mixed with water, 150 - 250mls of cold tap water should be sufficient. It is not unusual for the mixture to become hot when mixed, if this is the case leave it to cool down before taking.

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## What to expect when you take Picolax

You can expect to have frequent loose bowel motions at any time after taking a dose of Picolax. It will be similar to having diarrhoea and you need to ensure that you have access to a toilet that is close by at all times.

It is very important that you replace fluid lost from your body by drinking plenty of **clear** fluids preferably water throughout your treatment with Picolax. Try to keep warm, you often feel cold when you develop frequent loose/watery bowel motions.

**Drink at least a large glassful of water (clear fluid) every hour while you are awake. It is better to avoid alcohol while you are on the Picolax treatment plan (as alcohol causes dehydration) however, a small amount may be consumed.**

The success of the hospital procedure depends on the bowel being as clear as possible.

It is helpful to use a barrier cream around your bottom: Sudocream or Zinc & Caster Oil cream are excellent. You may also want to wear a small pad to protect your underwear.

If you have a stoma, contact your Stoma Care Nurse for advice. You may need drainable appliances to enable you to manage the diarrhoea.

## Possible side-effects

- Occasionally you may develop vomiting and severe diarrhoea (which can lead to dehydration, loss of fluid and body salts). If this happens stop taking the Picolax and report to your doctor.
- You may experience tiredness, headache, nausea, and stomach pains. This is normal; continue to take Picolax unless you feel unable to do so.
- Pain low down round your anus can also occur.
- Allergic reactions requiring medical attention are rare.

Do not hesitate to contact your doctor if you experience any severe side effects, or if you are at all worried.

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## PICOLAX Treatment Plan For AFTERNOON Appointments

### STEP 1: 5 DAYS BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE

If you are having a colonoscopy you must stop taking Warfarin **five** days before your procedure. **Make sure that the doctor at the hospital or your GP has given you advice on this.**

### STEP 2: 2 DAYS BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE

Eat foods which are low in fibre. Avoid foods such as fruit, green vegetables, cereals, baked beans and brown bread. Choose foods from the acceptable foods list provided separately with this plan.

### STEP 3: THE DAY BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE

- **Breakfast**

Small quantity of low fibre foods from the “foods allowed” list. Black tea/coffee, drink plenty of water or cordial. Avoid foods from the “not allowed list”.
- **Mid morning**

Black tea or coffee. You may have sugar or sugar substitutes.
- **Lunch**

**(No later than 12 midday)**  
Small quantity of low fibre foods from the “foods allowed” list. Black tea or coffee, drink plenty of water or cordial. Avoid foods from the “not allowed list”.
- **Mid afternoon**

Drink at least one glass of water or fruit cordial every hour.
- **6pm**

Take the **FIRST** sachet of **Picolax** (mix with approximately 250 mls of cold water). Drink half a pint of water hourly throughout the day until bedtime.
- **Supper 7– 9pm**

Suggested menu:  
  
Small amount of meat. This can be well minced beef, lamb, ham, veal, pork or poultry. You can have a small amount of fish instead of meat, you may have shellfish.  
  
With any one of the following:  
  
2 slices of white bread/toast without butter or margarine, **or**  
2 egg sized potatoes without skin, boiled, mashed or baked, but without butter or margarine or oil, **or**  
White (not brown) rice.

Vegetarians may have a small quantity of texturised vegetable protein in place of meat or fish.

**Alternatively you can choose from the “foods allowed” list.**

## **PICOLAX Treatment Plan For AFTERNOON Appointments**

### **STEP 4:**

### **DAY OF YOUR PROCEDURE**

- **6 – 7am**

Take the SECOND sachet of **Picolax** (mix with approximately 250 mls of cold water). Continue drinking clear fluids hourly.

- **Breakfast**

No solid food, one cup of black coffee or tea with sugar if desired.  
Drink at least one large glass of water or fruit cordial each hour.

- **Lunch**

**(No later than 12 midday)** Clear soup or meat extract drink only. **NO solid food**

**You may continue to have clear fluid up to the time of your procedure.**

Useful contacts:

**If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact:**

**Norwich Bowel Cancer Screening Practitioners on 01603 288635 (08.00am – 17.00pm Monday to Friday). If you have any urgent concerns outside these hours please contact your GP surgery.**

### **Foods allowed (small quantities)**

- Tender lean meat, poultry, ham, liver, kidney fish.
- Fruit flavoured or set yoghurt,
- Potatoes – boiled, mashed, roast or chips, (no skins)
- Well cooked cauliflower florets (no stalks), carrots, turnip or swede
- Consommé or strained soup
- Soft tinned fruit in natural juice, except those with pips
- White bread, white flour
- White rice and pasta
- Water biscuits, cream crackers, Rich Tea, Marie plain sponge cake
- Plain scone (no fruit)
- Honey, syrup,
- Ice cream
- Jellies without fruit but NOT red/orange/purple
- Herbs and spices
- Tea, coffee (sugar allowed)
- Strained fruit juices
- Squash
- A small amount of alcohol
- Water
- Fizzy drinks

### **Foods not allowed**

- Tough, fibrous meat, hamburgers, beef burgers, sausages, faggots
- Sausage rolls, pasties. Pies and pastries
- Whole fruit yoghurts, Muesli yoghurt
- Jacket potatoes, where skins are eaten
- All vegetables not listed above
- All salads
- Baked beans
- Thick vegetable soup
- All fruit not listed above
- Coloured Jellies
- Whole meal and granary bread
- Wholemeal flour
- Brown rice and whole wheat pasta
- High fibre crisp breads, digestives, hob-nobs
- Cakes containing dried fruit, nuts or coconut
- All nuts and dried fruit
- Jam or marmalade with skin or pips
- Peanut butter
- All high fibre breakfast cereals, porridge, bran
- Chutney, pickles
- Cheese, cottage cheese or cheese sauce
- Butter, margarine and fats and oils
- Ribena
- Eggs