

Preparation for the Hydrogen Breath Test

Digestive and Liver Disease Clinic
UT Southwestern Medical Center

To the Patient: Read these instructions 2 WEEKS before you come for your procedure.

WHY DO I NEED THIS TEST?

This test will help us measure how much hydrogen gas is in your breath. You may need this test if you:

- Have diarrhea, loose stools, bloating and gas
- Can not drink milk or eat milk products

PREPARATION FOR THE TEST:

- For **four weeks** before your test, you should **not** take any antibiotics.
- For one week before you test, **do not** take any laxatives or stool softeners (for example Colace®, Milk of Magnesia®, Ex-Lax®) or stool bulking agents (for example Metamucil® or Citrucel®).
- You should also not undergo any test that requires cleansing of the bowel, such as **colonoscopy** or **barium enema**.

THE DAY BEFORE THE TEST:

- You may consume **only** the following foods and drinks: **plain white bread, plain white rice, plain white potatoes, baked or broiled chicken or fish, water, and non-flavored black coffee or tea.**
- Only **salt** may be used to flavor your food. Butter and margarine **are not** permitted.
- Soda/cola drinks **are not** permitted.
- Do not eat or drink anything else – **it could give false results for the test.**
- Specifically, avoid **beans, pasta, fiber cereals, and high fiber foods.**
- The night before the test, have an early dinner of rice and meat.
- Do not eat anything **after 10pm** the day before the test.
- You can drink water only up to **4 hours before the test.**

THE DAY OF THE TEST:

- **Two hours** before the test, brush your teeth.
- **Do not** eat, drink, chew gum or tobacco, smoke cigarettes, or eat breath mints or candy before or during the test.
- **Do not** sleep or exercise while the test is being done
- You may take your morning medication as usual with a sip of water

WHAT TO EXPECT

- You will be given some medicine to drink and we will measure samples of your breath to find out how much hydrogen gas it contains.
- We will ask you to breathe into a bag every 15-20 minutes. You may need to do this for 3 hours.
- You may bring some reading or craft materials with you to occupy your time.

NOTIFY THE MEDICAL STAFF OF ANY RECENT ANTIBIOTIC THERAPY, RUNNY DIARRHEA OR COLONOSCOPIES, SINCE IT MAY AFFECT THE TEST.