

I've been thinking...



Ode to Colonoscopies Everywhere
July 2009

I've been thinking about fiber, movies, and good old Spic and Span.

Admittedly, I've been thinking too long about it. Actually, I'm eleven years late. But in the morning I'm stepping up to the plate for my first colonoscopy. Yes, I've seen Katie Couric's procedure on [YouTube](#)¹ and heard her appeals on the other tube. I had even scheduled (then involuntarily bowed out of) a colorectal screening back in 2005. Nevertheless, like syndicated columnist David Barry, I've procrastinated for a decade. Never mind my litany of lame excuses.

Taking the advice of a gastroenterologist who's dipped his fiber-optic camera into thousands, this rookie will bat leadoff tomorrow. During a consulting engagement, the GI doc bared his soul. "I've actually had dreams," he said, "in which I performed surgery on a patient that didn't need it, while another patient failed to get the treatment he did need—all because we mixed up their biopsies during their colonoscopies."

Anticipating my date with the scope, I sought the surgeon's counsel. He said, "You reduce your risk by being first on the table." I'm number one.

He was equally interested in *our* insights. We talked about scanning patient wristbands to produce bar-coded labels for application on tissue samples at the point of collection. He immediately understood how this would reduce the risk of his middle-of-the-night dreams becoming middle-of-the-day nightmares.

For those who haven't been around the bases, here's the routine.

On Sunday (happy Father's Day), I had to forsake fiber. Piece of cake. I could do that. Tim Conway says, "I told my wife, 'If you don't stop feeding me all this bran, I'm going to pass wicker furniture.'" I understand the preference for simple carbohydrates. However, I hadn't realized how much I liked fiber until it was forbidden. Things only got worse with Monday's mandatory clear-liquid fast. By suppertime, I could have killed for a slice of 32-grain toast. I won't be giving up fiber for Lent.

The worst was yet to come—at suppertime, no less. I'm talking about the 50 liters of an impossible-to-describe nasty "lemon-lime" drug they make you

¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15JsYSZIT-Q&feature=related>

chug the night before Christmas. It's called MoviPrep,TM and it had this creature stirring all through the house most of the night. Next time I'm guided through a medication-reconciliation process, I'm putting MoviPrep on my allergy list. It gave some serious runs, OK?

You can read about the wonder drug at MoviPrep.com.² I agree, it sounds like a blog that sets readers up for a night at the movies. Not quite. This gully washer leaves you feeling like *The Hangover*, though admittedly I haven't seen the movie, and fortunately I've never had one. Drink twelve 8-ounce glasses of anything a few hours before a show, and you'll spend a good portion of the movie standing in the men's room. Slurp as much MoviPrep, and you'll be sitting in the men's room from the trailers to the credits—for at least two showings.

Recently, I was at Costco helping some elderly folks maneuver their cart through checkout and beyond to their car. It was freighted with four cases of diet soda—144 12-ounce cans. Did I mention that perched atop the pop was a giant box of Depends? The routine had never bothered me before, but I was feeling a bit uneasy about meeting the lady with the Magic MarkerTM at the exit who reconciles receipts with goods on their way out of the warehouse. I spent Monday night convinced my time had come to Depend.

Well, it's Tuesday morning. I'm on my way home. Yeah, I exaggerated a bit about the preparation ritual. But not as much as Dave Barry did about the actual drill in "[My Colonoscopy](http://www.scribd.com/doc/4895047/My-Colonoscopy-by-Dave-Barry)"³—a must read. For example, colonoscopies aren't really 17,000 feet long. Actually, compared to the pre-op flush, the Roto-RooterTM session turned out to be a cakewalk. A base on balls. Essentially, you lie on your side and watch videos for half an hour. Enough Valium, and you don't care what's playing.

So, I did it! Or should I say *they* did it? And while I didn't feel a thing, I am pretty hungry. The bear's hunting for some porridge. Seeds. Nuts. Berries.



Wicker. *Anything* with fiber. I am also working on a new theory about why the pudgy Quaker on the round oats box has a funny smile on his face. And, of course, I'm proud to have joined the millions who've helped keep a smile on Katie Couric's.

As for the result? I will spare you the pictures, but the procedure was uneventful. No polyps. No biopsies to get mixed up. They said, "Your colon is Spic and Span." Thanks be to God. However, I'm still troubled about the potential for mislabeling biopsies and mistreating patients. Bar codes. Hello.

² <http://www.moviprep.com>

³ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/4895047/My-Colonoscopy-by-Dave-Barry>

What do you think?



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P.S. Spic and Span. Hmm. Maybe it is possible to describe the taste of MoviPrep.

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