AN ADVICE SHEET FOR PATIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN PRESCRIBED AN 
ORAL BOWEL CLEANSING AGENT.

You have been prescribed an oral bowel cleansing agent (sometimes also called a ‘bowel prep’). Its role is to clear out your bowels. This is important to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the planned procedure. There is a risk of developing dehydration, low blood pressure or kidney problems with this medication. The doctor prescribing the oral bowel cleansing agent will have assessed your risk and identified the most appropriate medication for you. You should also have had a blood test to check your kidney function. A number of oral bowel cleansing agents are available. You should refer to the manufacturer’s instructions when taking your preparation. However, the following rules apply in all cases.

The prescribed dose of oral bowel cleansing agent should not be exceeded. The oral bowel cleansing agent should not be taken over a period longer than 24 hours.

Oral bowel cleansing agents predispose to dehydration. You should maintain a good fluid intake whilst taking these medications. If you develop the symptoms of dehydration, and cannot increase your fluid intake, then you should seek medical attention. These symptoms include dizziness or light-headedness (particularly on standing up), thirst, or a reduced urine production.

You should follow any specific advice you have been given with regard to your regular medications. Medications that you may have been asked to temporarily discontinue include:

- **Antihypertensives** (to lower your blood pressure) such as ACE inhibitors like Ramipril®
- **Diuretics** (‘water tablets’, such as furosemide)
- **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs** (a type of pain killer, such as ibuprofen)
- **Iron preparations** (for anaemia, such as ferrous sulphate)
- **Aspirin, dipyridamole, clopidogrel or warfarin** (these agents thin your blood out; you may have been asked to discontinue them depending on the nature of the procedure that is planned).

If you have not received specific advice regarding your regular medications then you should continue to take them as normal. However, you may need to amend the timing as it is preferable to avoid taking them less than one hour either side of any dose of oral bowel cleansing agent.

Patients taking immunosuppression for transplanted organs should seek the advice of their doctor before taking an oral bowel cleansing agent.

Patients taking the oral contraceptive pill should take alternative precautions during the week following taking the oral bowel cleansing agent.

If you experience problems, advice from a healthcare professional is available on (tel no).