

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Barium Enema

INTRODUCTION

The Barium Enema examination is a radiological investigation of the colon or large bowel.

PATIENT PREPARATION

It is important that you follow these instructions carefully. The success of this examination depends on the bowel being as clear as possible. Otherwise the examination may need to be repeated.

DIET TO BE FOLLOWED THE DAY BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

8 am (day before appointment)

Start clear liquid diet. No solid food is allowed from this time until after your barium enema examination

CLEAR LIQUID means water, clear soup, or soup that has been strained to remove any solids, fruit juices without pulp (but not red or purple coloured juices) black tea or black coffee and clear fizzy/ non fizzy drinks e.g. lemonade.

12pm (day before appointment)

Please take 2x5 mg blascody (dulcolax).

3pm (day before appointment)

Please take one sachet of Citra Fleet to dissolve in one glass of water (250ml). Then drink two glasses of water (250 ml per glass)

Please drink an additional glass of water (or more, if thirsty) every hour between 3 and 9 pm. do not drink after midnight.

The preparations above are taken to cleanse the bowel and may cause some diarrhea and cramps. This is quite usual with a preparation of this type and need not cause you any undue concern. Female patients please let us know in advance if you are or think you might be pregnant.

DURING THE EXAMINATION

The examination is carried out in the radiology department. While lying on the x-ray couch, a small plastic tube is gently inserted into the back passage. This process should not be painful and it is made easier if the muscles are relaxed as much as possible.

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Barium liquid is allowed to slowly run into the bowel via the tube. The progress of barium is carefully reviewed by the consultant radiologist on a television screen during the procedure. Excess liquid is then allowed to drain away so that only the bowel wall is coated with barium.

Air is then introduced into the bowel via the small tube. This again should not be painful but it does tend to make the abdomen a little bloated and you may feel some discomfort. A series of x-rays are taken of the bowel. The procedure takes approximately 30 minutes.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

The tube is removed and you will then be escorted to a nearby toilet. Assuming that you are not having any other investigations, you may eat and drink normally. Please confirm this with the radiographer before leaving the department.

For the next 2 to 3 days after the examination, you are encouraged to slightly increase your intake of fiber and fluid to minimise the onset of constipation which may sometimes occur as a result of this test.

RESULTS

The results of the examination to be sent to your referring doctor.

MEDICAL RADIATION: RISKS V BENEFITS

Medical x-rays give a small dose on top of natural radiation. The amount of radiation received during a diagnostic X-Ray procedure is low, resulting in the equivalent of approximately a year's background radiation.

As long as it is clearly necessary to help make the correct diagnosis and treatment decision, the benefits of diagnosis and treatment resulting from the examination should outweigh any small radiation risks.