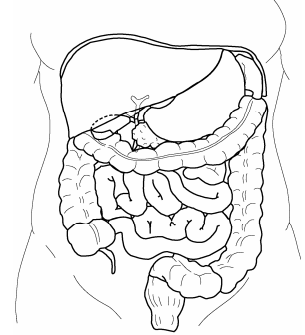


BARIUM ENEMA

Patient Education

What is the purpose of this test?

The large intestine, or colon, is the last part of the digestive tract. It is the organ of elimination and is approximately five feet long. The colon consists of the appendix, cecum, ascending colon, transverse colon, descending colon, sigmoid, and rectum. Your physician may order a barium enema examination to look for ulcers, tumors (i.e., polyps), or signs of certain other medical conditions. The procedure is also frequently performed on individuals suffering from chronic diarrhea, blood in stool, constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, unexplained weight loss, a change in bowel habits, or an unexplained blood loss.



How should I prepare for this test?

You should drink clear liquids such as water, juice, cola, tea, coffee, and broth the day before the procedure. You should avoid dairy products. You will be instructed to get a colon prep kit from your local pharmacy consisting of a laxative, an enema prep, and a suppository. This item does not require a prescription. Instructions will be in the kit and you will begin the prep the evening before the barium enema is to be performed. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight before the exam. You may take your morning medications with small sips of water.

How will this test affect me?

You will not be medicated for this procedure. Your cooperation is very important to make this exam a success. You will be given an enema with barium, which will enable the radiologist to visualize the colon. Abdominal pressure and some cramping are common sensations that most people experience. This mild discomfort only lasts a few minutes. When the procedure is completed, drink lots of fluids for the next 24 hours to clear the colon of any remaining barium.

How is the test performed?

The radiologic technologist will bring you to the exam room and ask a series of questions about your symptoms and medical history. You will be asked to put on a gown and be positioned on the x-ray table. A small tube is inserted into the rectum and a mixture of barium and water will be passed through the tube into the colon. The radiologist and technologist will observe the procedure on the fluoroscopy monitor during the filling of your colon. This part of the procedure will only take five to ten minutes. You will have several x-rays recorded while the colon is filled with barium. Most of the barium will be drained back through the tubing into a bag. The rectal tube will then be removed and you will be directed to the bathroom to completely evacuate any remaining liquid. After expelling the barium, the technologist will make a x-ray to see how well the colon cleared. The complete procedure will take approximately 45 minutes.

How will I receive results of the test?

Results will be sent to your physician who will discuss the results with you.

CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS