

UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital Radiology Patient/Family Information  
**Barium Enema****What is a Barium Enema?**

A barium enema is a test used to determine the condition of the large intestine or colon. Barium is a substance that shows up on a radiography (x-ray) film and is inserted rectally into the colon. The procedure is performed in Radiology and takes about 30 to 45 minutes.

**Special Instructions**

If you are normally on a special diet, like a diabetic, you should ask your doctor about planning your diet for this procedure.

If you have a colostomy or active colitis of any type, ask your doctor or a radiologist before starting this colon prep.

If you have had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy, it would be preferable to delay the barium enema at least 24 hours. If a biopsy has been done, the barium enema should be delayed 10 to 24 days.

Before the exam, please inform your doctor if there is a possibility you may be pregnant.

**Preparation**

Please bring your medication list with you to your exam.

**Please Note:** Detailed preparation instructions are listed in this brochure and must be strictly followed or interpretation of the study will be impossible and it will have to be repeated.

Date of Examination: \_\_\_\_\_

Date to Begin Prep: \_\_\_\_\_

Appointment Time \_\_\_\_\_

A barium enema requires that your colon be absolutely clean and free of any fecal material. Preparation for this procedure begins two days before you are scheduled for it and includes the following dietary schedule:

**Dietary Schedule**

**Day 1:** Two days prior to exam

- Low residue diet
- Drink extra fluids. No milk products.

**Day 2:** One day prior to exam

7:30 am	Breakfast should be a clear liquid diet
8:30 to 11:30 am	Drink an 8 oz. glass of water or clear liquid per hour
12 pm	Clear liquid lunch

1 to 4 pm	Drink a 8 oz. glass of water or clear liquid per hour
4:30 pm	Drink one bottle (10 oz.) of magnesium citrate (liquid laxative). <i>Please consult your doctor if you have kidney disease.</i>
5:30 pm	Drink an 8 oz. glass of water or clear liquid
6 pm	Clear liquid supper
6:30 pm	Take 4 Dulcolax tablets (Bisacodyl = Dulcolax)
7 to 11 pm	Drink a 8-oz. glass of water or clear liquid per hour

After midnight, **DO NOT** eat or drink anything.

**Day 3:** Day of Exam

No breakfast. Report at scheduled time.

\*Note for dialysis patients:

- Liquids as usual
- One 8 oz. glass of fluid with laxative
- No hourly fluids necessary

**A Low Residue Diet Consists of:**

**Strained Fruit Juices**

Orange, apple, grape, grapefruit, pineapple

**Cereal**

Cream of Wheat, Farina, Rice Krispies

**Eggs**

Any style

**Cottage Cheese**

Dry, not creamed

**Meat**

Canned baby meats, baked skinless fish, finely chopped canned tuna

**Macaroni, Spaghetti, Noodles, or Rice**

Oil, butter or margarine

**Sweets and Sugars**

Plain gelatin without added fruits or vegetables, moderate amounts of sugar or honey

**Seasonings**

Moderate amounts

**Beverages**

Same as clear liquids

**No bread, fruit, vegetables, milk or alcoholic beverages**

## **A Clear Liquid Diet**

Clear liquids include water, tea, clear gelatin, lemon-lime soda, orange or grape punch (not juice) and broth.

## **What Happens During the Test?**

The procedure is done by a radiologist, a doctor who specializes in performing and interpreting radiology procedures. A preliminary film will check for complete cleansing. Barium, a chalk-like liquid is inserted through a tube rectally into the colon after you have been placed on the x-ray table. While the barium is being released into the colon, the radiologist will be taking radiographs (x-rays) of different portions of your colon. To better see the inner wall of the colon, air may be inserted along with barium.

During the examination, you will be asked to lie in different positions so that the entire colon fills with barium. The radiologist may wish to inject a bowel relaxant medication into a vein in your hand during the procedure. This is done when it can improve the exam. Gentle pressure may be applied to your abdomen to aid the radiologist in seeing your entire colon. Near the end of the procedure, when the full amount of barium has been given, you may have a sensation of fullness.

When the examination is completed, you will be taken to a nearby bathroom to expel the barium. Another film may be taken after the barium is expelled. Before you leave, the radiologist will study the x-rays. Occasionally, it is necessary to take more x-rays.

## **After the Test**

You may go back to your normal diet and activities. If other tests have been scheduled you should check with your doctor. Some people experience mild constipation. This can usually be controlled by drinking large amounts of water. If constipation continues after three days, call your doctor. Your stools may be white for 1 to 3 days after the examination due to the barium that is still in the colon.

## **Important Reminders**

Each part of the preparation (diet, fluid, osmotic laxative and stimulating laxative) is equally important. Shortcutting any of these steps lowers the chance of getting the colon clean enough for a diagnostic exam and increases the chance of having a repeat exam.

## **When Will I Know the Results?**

The radiologist will review all the x-rays and information shortly after the exam is completed. A written report will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss these results with you.

Please allow your physician the time needed to review these results.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Exam Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_