

BARIUM ENEMA

What is a barium enema?

A barium enema is a special x-ray examination of your colon (large bowel). When a disease is suspected to involve the colon, a barium enema is one of the procedures available to help diagnose the problem.

Some of the common symptoms of colonic disease are abdominal pain or discomfort, anaemia, weight loss, diarrhea and constipation. The procedure is also *performed* on patients having no symptoms but a strong family history of colonic disease.

What special instructions do I need to follow to be ready for my examination?

If there is a possibility that you are pregnant, please inform your physician before the procedure, as the procedure may need to be postponed or cancelled or the problem investigated in another way. ***Diabetic patients and patients with heart, kidney, or liver failure should consult with their physician before starting this bowel preparation.***

It is very important that your colon be clean and empty.

FOUR (4) OR MORE DAYS BEFORE YOUR STUDY, PURCHASE THE FOLLOWING AT A DRUGSTORE:

- 1 packet **DULCOLAX** (Bisacodyl laxative)—the packet contains 5 mg tablets. You will be required to take 4 tablets in total.
- 1 box **PICO-SALAX** – the box contains 2 packets. You will follow instructions below, NOT the insert instructions.

BOWEL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. THREE DAYS AND TWO DAYS BEFORE THE EXAMINATION:

Both evenings at 5:00 p.m.: take 2 **DULCOLAX** tablets (5 mg. each) with water.

2. ON THE DAY BEFORE THE EXAMINATION:

Diet for this day is restricted to **CLEAR LIQUIDS ONLY for the entire day.** Clear liquids can include apple juice, Jello, chicken broth, Gatorade/Powerade (clear), popsicles, water, ice, black tea or coffee, decaffeinated pop, etc. **NO MILK PRODUCTS** or other liquid that you cannot see through are allowed. No solid food is allowed.

At 11:00 am: take the 1st packet of **PICO-SALAX**. Mix it in a 5 ounce (150 ml) mug of cold water. Stir while drinking to ensure all the laxative has dissolved. Drink at least one glass of water each hour over the next three hours. Take extra clear fluids if desired. The laxative will produce at least 3-6 watery bowel movements

At 3:00 pm: take the 2nd packet of **PICO-SALAX**. Mix in a 5 ounce (150 ml) mug of cold water, again stirring while drinking. Continue to drink at least a glass of water each over the next three hours. Take extra clear fluids if desired. There will be further watery bowel movements.

After midnight: Do not eat or drink.

3. DAY OF THE TEST

No breakfast. No solids or liquids—2-4 oz of water only if desired.

You may continue to take your routine oral medication with a small sip of water. Please do not use perfume or other scented products on the day of your study.

Who will be performing my examination?

This procedure will be performed by a radiologist (a specialist medical doctor). A medical radiation technologist specializing in x-ray imaging will assist.

What will happen to me during my examination?

When you arrive in the Diagnostic Imaging department, you will need to change into a hospital gown. Once in the x-ray room, the technologist will briefly explain the procedure to you. If you have any allergies, please let us know.

The technologist will then insert a small lubricated tube into your rectum (anus). This will be used for the delivery of barium (a thick liquid that shows up white on x-ray pictures) and air into your bowel. A bowel relaxant may be injected by the radiologist into a vein in your arm. If you have glaucoma (an eye disease), please let the radiologist know.

Once the flow of barium has started, you may experience a feeling of discomfort or urgency in your rectum. This will gradually subside. It is important that you tighten your buttock muscles to keep the tube in place and the liquid in your bowel. The radiologist will control the equipment and make use of a microphone to direct you into the necessary positions. X-ray pictures will be taken. Once the pictures have been checked for quality, the tube will be removed and you will be allowed to go to the washroom.

The technologist will be available at all times to answer your questions, offer support and assist you as necessary. In total, the procedure can be expected to take up to one hour.

Should I expect any after effects as a result of my examination?

If you receive an injection, you may feel thirsty. Rarely, double or blurred vision may occur following the injection. This will go away on its own, however, tell the Diagnostic Imaging staff so that they can plan any follow-up care.

You may also experience some gas cramps as the effects of the bowel relaxant subside. This will improve with time. If the cramps continue causing significant discomfort, please let your doctor know.

Resume your normal diet. You are encouraged to drink 8 glasses of water a day for the next two days. This will help the barium to pass through your bowel more easily. If you are on a fluid restricted diet, please discuss fluid intake with your own doctor.

When will I know the results?

Your doctor will usually have a written report from the radiologist within one week of your examination. You should obtain the results from your own physician. If there is any urgency, your physician is more than welcome to contact us by telephone.

If you have any other questions or concerns that have not been answered here, please feel free to ask the Diagnostic Imaging staff involved in your examination.

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