

BARIUM ENEMA (B.E.)

Purpose: A barium enema is used to detect any abnormalities of the colon or rectum, such as tumors, polyps, inflammatory disease, diverticula, (pouches within the bowel), and other changes in the large intestine and rectum.

How long will this procedure take? This procedure can take up to one hour.

NOTE: Sometimes your physician requests that this examination be done in conjunction with a sigmoidoscopy, which would be done prior to the barium enema. In this case, you may be asked to walk around for a few minutes and then go to the restroom to eliminate some of the air which is usually instilled for the sigmoidoscopy. This will take some extra time, but will also provide you more comfort during the procedure.

Preparation: It is essential that the bowel be empty. The following instructions must be followed in order to obtain the best bowel preparation:

- (1) Clear liquids the day prior to the examination. This includes NO BREAKFAST the day before or the day of the examination. No milk, tomato soup, crackers, or any other solid-producing foods.
- (2) 4 tablespoons castor oil at 4 PM the day before, and an early morning cleansing enema on the day of the examination.
- (3) If you can't take castor oil, you may use Go Lytely or Nu Lytely colon cleansing preparation instead, however, a prescription from your physician is required.

Procedure: You change into a hospital gown and remove all foreign objects such as jewelry, snaps, buttons, etc.

There is a special "balloon" tip used for the enema which will help you retain the barium during the examination. As your colon fills with barium and fluoroscopy is being performed, the radiologist will ask you to turn on the x-ray table to different positions. After he leaves the room, the radiologic technologist will ask you to hold your breath in order to take additional overhead films.

When your films have been approved by the radiologist, you will be allowed to use the restroom after which a "post-evacuation" film is taken. All your films will be reviewed by the radiologist before you leave the department to assure that no additional films are necessary.

After the examination: The radiologist will study your films and dictate a report which will be sent to your physician within 24 hours. You may resume regular meals and medications after the examination. You may notice chalky stools for several days. A high-fiber diet if permitted, and increasing liquid intake will help prevent possible constipation.