

Barium Enema – A Patients Guide

What is a Barium Enema?

Barium is a white substance which shows up the outline of the bowel on X-Ray pictures, acting like a temporary dye. This X-ray test is to look at the last few feet of the large bowel. Your doctor will have explained why you need to have this done.

Before your scan

It is important that the bowel is correctly prepared prior to the examination, to make this happen you will need to follow a special diet and take some sachets of laxative. Please follow the attached instructions carefully.

Please arrive **15 Minutes before your examination time** to allow time to get changed. If you are **Diabetic** or have a **Colostomy** please contact the department when you receive this letter.

You should expect to be in the X-ray Department for approximately 1 hour. Please bring a dressing gown with you.

What happens when I arrive?

On arrival in the X-ray Department, you will be asked to change into a gown. Your clothes will be placed in a bag and brought with you to the examination room.

What does it involve?

The radiographer will talk to you about exactly what is going to happen. A small tube will be placed into your back passage and barium and air will be passed through the tube to enable pictures to be taken. You will be asked to roll over onto your side or tummy to enable different images to be taken. The radiographer may give you an injection to relax the muscle of the bowel to help the test go more easily. Sometimes it is possible for you to watch the examination via a screen.

The test takes about 20 minutes. After the test the radiographer will remove the soft rubber tube and will take you to the toilet to pass the air and barium until you feel comfortable.

Are there any side/after effects?

You will feel a sense of fullness in your tummy during the test. Abdominal cramps are sometimes felt afterwards. These usually pass when you have opened your bowels.

The barium may make you constipated. Therefore, to help prevent constipation have lots to drink for a day or so to flush the barium out of your gut. If you are able to, eat plenty of fruit for a day or so.

The barium will make your faeces white or pale until it has all come out of your gut. If you had an injection to relax the muscles in your stomach, it may cause some blurring of your vision for an hour or so. If this happens it is best not to drive.

After the examination.

You should be able to go home as soon as the test is finished. Some people feel a little sickly for a few hours afterwards. You can eat normally straight after.

Further information

If you have any concerns or questions about your Barium Enema please telephone the 1st Floor X-Ray Reception Desk.

When will you get the results?

The images will be examined after your visit and a written report on the findings sent to your referring doctor.