

BARIUM ENEMA PROCEDURAL INFORMATION AND POST-PROCEDURAL PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

What is a Barium Enema Examination?

A barium enema is a radiographic examination of the colon (large intestine). The colon is made visible with the use of fluoroscopy (real-time-X-ray), a liquid suspension called barium (barium is classified as a medication by the Food and Drug Administration), and sometimes air (used in conjunction with barium). Barium “highlights” the colon enabling the radiology provider to evaluate the colon and possibly provide a diagnosis for your suspected condition(s).

Post-Procedural Instructions

You may resume your normal diet and activities after the barium enema examination, unless your doctor advises you otherwise. There are no physical restrictions after your examination.

The barium that was administered into the colon **is not** absorbed into the body. The barium is expelled via normal bowel movements. Your bowel movements may be lighter in color until all of the barium has been eliminated from the colon. Barium may cause constipation or possibly obstruction if it’s not completely eliminated from your body. *To avoid constipation you should drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fiber to expel the barium from the body.* In rare cases, barium may cause irritation of the colon. Drinking plenty of fluids can also help prevent irritation.

Notify your doctor if you experience any of the following:

- Difficulty with bowel movements or inability to have a bowel movement
- Pain and/or distention of the abdomen
- Stools that are smaller in diameter than normal
- Blood in your stool

Your doctor may give you additional or alternate instructions after the procedure, depending on your particular situation.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please call us at 630-545-7880.

This information is based off of recommendations from the American College of Radiology and from Johns Hopkins University.