

Diagnostic Imaging Department

BARIUM ENEMA (Morning Appointment)

What is a barium enema?

A barium enema is an x-ray examination of the large bowel.

How is the examination done?

This examination involves partly filling your bowel with barium and air through the rectum (back passage), after which x-ray films will be taken with you standing and lying in several different positions. This is a straightforward examination and should cause you little discomfort. There are normally no ill effects from the barium.

For the examination to be successful, it is necessary for the bowel to be empty, otherwise the examination may have to be repeated. Please follow the instructions attached for the special diet and the Fleet Phospho-soda laxative.

IF YOUR BOWEL IS NOT CLEAR THE EXAMINATION MAY HAVE TO BE REPEATED.

ONE WEEK BEFORE

Continue to take prescribed medication, but if you are taking iron tablets, you should stop taking them one week before your examination.

FIVE DAYS BEFORE

For the five days before the examination you may only eat what is listed in the low residue diet.

PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

If you have diabetes and are on tablets or insulin, please contact us and we will send you an information leaflet on diet and medication.

THE DAY BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

FLEET – The liquid which you take on the day before the examination is a laxative and it will be necessary for you to be within easy reach of a toilet all day. In some cases it may mean you will need to take a day off work.

Please follow these instructions very carefully:-

NB – Clear fluid includes tea or coffee without milk, clear soup, meat extract drinks, eg Oxo, Marmite, plain water (nor carbonated).

7 AM BREAKFAST – Straight after breakfast, dilute the contents of one bottle (45ml) of Fleet Phospho-soda in half a glass (120ml) of cold water. Drink this and follow with at least one full glass (240ml) of cold water. More water or clear fluid may be taken if desired.

1 PM LUNCH – In place of lunch, drink at least three full glasses of clear fluid or water. During the afternoon you may drink water or clear fluid as desired.

7 PM SUPPER – In place of supper, drink at least one full glass of clear fluid or water. You may drink more if you like.

SECOND DOSE – Straight after supper, dilute the contents of the second bottle (45ml) of Fleet Phospho-soda in half a glass (120ml) of cold water. Drink this and follow with at least one full glass (240ml) of cold water. More water or clear fluid may be taken if desired.

You may drink additional water or clear fluid whenever you feel necessary up to midnight. After midnight you should drink no further water or clear fluid as this may affect the outcome of your examination.

THE DAY OF YOUR APPOINTMENT

The examination takes about 30 minutes but you will be in the department for about one hour. This will allow time for registration, undressing, having the examination and dressing again. There are normally no ill effects from the barium.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

As an injection of muscle relaxant sometimes need to be given during this examination, this can affect your eyesight temporarily. Therefore there may be a delay of about an hour before you can safely drive.

CONSTIPATION

Make sure you drink EXTRA FLUIDS and eat extra fruit and vegetables for the next 48 hours to prevent constipation. If you do get constipated, take a mild laxative.

RESULTS

The doctor who sent you for the examination will get the results within one week.

PLEASE NOTE – THE CONTRACEPTIVE PILL

If you are using the contraceptive pill, a loose bowel may make this ineffective. It is therefore recommended that other contraceptive measures, eg sheath, cap, are also used for a period of 14 days following the examination. **DO NOT STOP USING THE PILL.**

FINALLY

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.