

Prepare for a Barium Enema Exam

A Barium Enema is an [x-ray](#) examination of the large intestine, also known as the colon. This includes the right or ascending colon, the transverse colon, the left or descending colon and the [rectum](#). The [appendix](#) and a portion of the small intestine may also be included.

Patient Safety Tips Prior to a diagnostic exam in Radiology

- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant, please tell your doctor or technologist.
- Please leave your valuables at home or in your room in the hospital.
- Please let us now if you need interpreting services, this can be arranged for you.

Preparation for the exam

- On the day preceding the exam, do not eat any solid foods. You may have jello, strained juices, and other liquids. You may drink as much as you like, but not any milk products.
- At 12 noon of the day preceding the exam, take one bottle of Magnesium Citrate.
- In the evening of the day preceding the exam, take 4 Dulcolax tablets with water.
- Please arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled exam time.

During the exam

- The technologist will verify your identification and exam requested.
- You will have the opportunity to ask the technologists questions.
- There will be an opportunity for you to talk with the radiologist about the plan for the procedure and give your consent.
- The duration of the exam will vary, but the average is about 30 minutes.
- The technologist will position you on the exam table, and give you instructions.
- The technologist will insert a lubricated enema tip into your rectum. Liquid barium will flow into the rectum. The radiologist will ask you to turn from side to side.
- In certain situations, the radiologist may introduce air along with the barium solution.
- If you feel uncomfortable, you should tell the technologist or radiologist.

After the exam

- You may go to the toilet facilities to expel the barium. The barium will make your stools white for a few days.
- If you are going home, you may resume normal activities.
- Drink plenty of fluids in the days following the exam.
- If you experience constipation after the exam, tell your doctor.