

# About Your Barium Enema

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## *What You Need to Know and Do*

A barium enema is an X-ray exam of your rectum and colon (bowel). A substance called barium is used to make your bowel show up more clearly on the X-ray.

This test is used to diagnose problems such as blockages, tumors, and other problems.

### What should I do before my appointment?

You should not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your test. You may need to stop eating the day before your test. Ask us how you need to prepare.

You may take your daily medicine the morning of your exam with a sip of water.

You may need to take a laxative or over-the-counter enema the night before your test.

Be sure to tell the radiologist or technologist if you:

- have any allergies
- have had any previous surgeries
- have medicine you take
- are or think you may be pregnant.

### When should I arrive for my appointment?

You will need to arrive at least 30 minutes before your appointment time to check in and complete paperwork.

### What happens during my test?

You will change into a hospital gown and lie down on an exam table.

A thin tube (catheter) is inserted into your rectum. The barium will be put into the catheter. Your colon will slowly fill up with the liquid. Air is also usually placed into your bowel through the catheter.

You will be asked to move into different positions and hold your breath while the X-rays are taken.

Pressure may be applied to your belly to get the best images (pictures).

You may be asked to empty your bowel before the last X-ray is taken.

### What happens after my test?

You should drink plenty of water to relieve any constipation you may have after the test. Your stool may appear white or light for a day or two.

You can usually go back to your normal activities and normal diet right away.