



Understanding your Barium Enema

You have been referred for an X-ray examination which involves using Barium. This guide will tell you about the procedure and help you prepare for the appointment.

What is a Barium Enema?

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

It is necessary to have the bowel completely empty, so it is essential that the instructions are carefully followed for preparation.

During the examination, you will be asked to lie on the x-ray table and a small tube will be introduced into your back passage and barium (a fluid which shows up on x-rays) and air is run through the tube into your bowel. As the barium and air travel round the bowel x-rays will be taken with you turning into different positions. After this you will be shown to the toilet to get rid of the barium and air. The procedure will take about half an hour.

The result will be sent to the General Practitioner or Consultant who referred you for the examination.

Are there any side effects?

A standard X-ray is painless. You cannot see or feel X-rays.

X-rays are a form of radiation. Everybody receives a small amount of radiation from the environment every day.

The radiation received from any single X-ray can be very small depending on the area being imaged, and may be similar to the amount you would be exposed to on a transatlantic flight.

However, if you receive many doses of radiation, the effect can build up and be harmful. Simply put, the less you receive, the better.

As a matter of safety, your doctor will only ask you to have an X-ray examination when there is no other way to find out the information. You should have as few X-rays as possible.

Unborn children are at greater risk from being exposed to X-rays because they are still developing. For this reason, routine X-ray examinations that involve irradiating an area between the diaphragms and the knees should only be performed on women who are sure they are not pregnant or within the first ten days of their menstrual cycle.

If you are, or suspect that you may be pregnant, please tell the radiographer before the X-ray is carried out. All the information you give will be treated with the strictest confidence.





Before your appointment

You will be given instructions of what you need to do for this examination by the staff at the Unit when you make the appointment. It is important that you follow all instructions carefully and if there is anything you are unsure of you must ring before your appointment.

When you arrive

One of our staff will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you may have. You will have to undress and put on an examination gown.

Giving your consent for the procedure

The information in this leaflet will give you an idea of what is involved in your X-ray. Before any medical procedure can be performed, the healthcare professional carrying out the procedure will let you know what to expect. It is your right to be given all the information you need to make an informed choice about whether you want to go through with the procedure or not. Please feel free to ask any questions.

You will need to agree to this examination by written consent.

Informed consent

The information contained within this leaflet is intended to provide you with an overview of the examination or treatment that you are to receive. Prior to any medical procedure being carried out, the healthcare professional conducting the procedure will describe the nature of the examination or treatment you are to receive and will detail any risks associated with the procedure. It is your right to be given sufficient information to be able to make an informed decision as to whether you wish to continue with the examination/treatment or to refuse to undergo the procedure.

The nature of some examinations and treatment requires that your consent to continue must be given in writing and a form will be provided for you to sign. Some examinations may only require your verbal consent. For further information regarding our consent policy, please contact the Centre to which you have been referred.

We take pride in the standard of service which we offer at InHealth. If you do have reason to complain, however, we take your comments seriously and a full complaints procedure is available upon request. Please ask a member of staff at the Centre who will be able to provide you with a copy, alternatively call the Central Bookings line on 0845 603 0854 for a copy of the policy or to make a complaint. If you are unhappy with our handling of your complaint, you can contact the Healthcare Commission at: Healthcare Commission, Finsbury Tower, 103-105 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8TG.

**Alternatively you can telephone
0207 448 9200 or visit...
www.healthcarecommission.org.uk**

Data Protection

InHealth will keep the information you provide for internal purposes. We may also share the information you provide, but from which you cannot be identified, with those responsible for meeting your treatment or expenses (or their agents) for research, statistical, educational, administrative or contractual purposes (for example, audit and continuous improvement). This will include the National Health Service if you are a NHS patient.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the most recent Healthcare Commission report, please address your request to the Unit Manager.

If you have any comments or suggestions about our patient information leaflet, please also direct them to the Unit Manager.

This patient information leaflet is reviewed annually and patient observations are welcomed as part of that process. Braille, audio CD and large print versions of this leaflet are available on request.

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