

Barium Enema

Patient Information and Preparation Instructions



Thank you for carefully following these instructions to ensure your exam produces the most accurate results. If you have any questions, please call (850) 878-4127.

IMPORTANT: Please obtain the required bowel prep at least 3 days before your exam.

What is a Barium Enema?

A barium enema is a diagnostic X-ray exam of your large intestine (colon) to check for colon cancer, polyps, diverticula, or other abnormalities.

How the Exam Works

- A small, flexible tube is gently placed into your rectum.
- The colon is slowly filled with a contrast liquid called barium, and sometimes a small amount of air.
- The technologist will take several X-ray pictures while you change positions.
- When finished, most of the barium will be drained, and you'll be able to use the restroom.

The test takes about 45 minutes. You may experience mild cramping or pressure during the test, which is normal and goes away when the exam is complete.

Why Bowel Preparation is Important

Your colon must be completely clean for the test to be accurate. Any stool left in the colon can hide important findings.

Call your referring provider before beginning the prep if you:

- Are on fluid restrictions
- Have kidney problems
- Have active diverticulitis, ulcerative colitis, or other bowel inflammation

Supplies You'll Need

Please purchase these items at least 3 days before your exam:

- 3 tablets of Dulcolax (Bisacodyl 5 mg)
- 1 bottle of MiraLAX (Polyethylene Glycol 3350, 8.3 oz or 238 g)
- 1 bottle of Gatorade/Sports Drink (64 oz, any flavor)

Two Days Before Your Exam

Eat a low-fiber diet for all meals. **Do not eat** raw fruits and raw vegetables, whole grains, meat, eggs, fried or fatty foods, dairy, beans, and nuts.

One Day Before Your Exam

Drink only clear liquids. **No solid food.** You may have:

- Water, tea, or black coffee (no milk or creamer)
- Broth or bouillon
- Clear juices such as apple, white grape, or cranberry
- Jello (any color)

Evening Before Your Exam

- **4:00 PM:** Take 3 Dulcolax tablets by mouth.
- **Mix your prep:** Combine the entire bottle of MiraLAX with the 64 oz Gatorade in a pitcher. Stir until completely dissolved. **Do not add** ice, sugar, or flavorings.
- **6:00 PM:** Drink one 8 oz glass every 10 minutes until finished.
- You may continue to drink clear liquids until midnight.

After Midnight

Do not eat or drink anything until after your exam is finished. You may take your morning medications with a small sip of water.

Day of Exam

- Bring your photo ID and insurance card.
- Arrive on time for your appointment.
- You may use the restroom before your test begins.
- **Nothing to eat or drink until the exam is complete.**

After the Exam

- You can resume your normal diet once the test is done.
- Drink plenty of fluids for the rest of the day to prevent constipation.
- Your bowel movements may appear white or lighter for a day or two. This is normal as the barium passes through.