

Lower GI Series / Barium Enema

Patient Information Sheet

A lower GI (gastrointestinal) series is a special x-ray examination of the colon (large intestine) and rectum. A contrast material, such as liquid barium sulfate and air, will be administered through an enema tube into the rectum. The lining of the intestines will be coated with contrast material to aid in the possible diagnosis of abnormalities.

Instructions for patient

- Your healthcare provider will provide detailed instructions on how to prepare for this exam. It is important that the colon (large intestine) is completely empty prior to the procedure to ensure proper imaging. After midnight, you should not have anything to eat or drink prior to the test. You may take prescribed medications with a small sip of water. Your healthcare provider may also instruct you to take a laxative (pill or liquid form) or over-the-counter enema the night before the exam. The preparation for this examination can also be found on the reverse side of our Southlake Diagnostic Imaging Radiography Requisition.
- You will be asked to remove all of your clothing and undergarments and wear a hospital gown during the exam. You will also be asked to remove jewelry.
- Women should inform their healthcare provider if there is any possibility of pregnancy. Please advise the technologist prior to the start of the procedure, whether or not you may be pregnant.

How the procedure is performed

The procedure will be performed by a Radiologist (specialized medical physician) and a Medical Radiation Technologist (MRT). The Radiologist or MRT will insert a small lubricated tube into your rectum (anus). This tube allows for the delivery of the contrast material into your large colon. A small balloon at the end of the tubing will be inflated to help you keep the tube inside.

Once the flow of contrast material has begun, you may experience feelings of slight discomfort or urgency to defecate. This will gradually subside. Air may be administered into the intestine to better visualize the lining. The Radiologist will begin imaging the intestines using a special type of x-ray called



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fluoroscopy. You will be asked to turn into different positions so that the entire colon can be visualized. At the end of your procedure, additional x-ray images of your colon will be performed by the Medical Radiation Technologist. Once the procedure is finished, the tube will be removed and you will be escorted to the restroom. The entire length of the exam will take between 30 to 60 minutes.

What happens after the procedure?

- You may resume your normal diet after the procedure. You are encouraged to increase your fluid intake for the next two days as the contrast material may cause temporary constipation.
- You may also take medications, as normal, unless otherwise instructed by your healthcare provider.
- It is normal that your stool appears light colored (white or gray) after the test due to the contrast material.
- If you experience significant changes in your bowel habits, you should contact your healthcare provider.

When and how will I know the results?

Please call as soon as possible to make a follow up appointment with your referring healthcare provider, to discuss the results of this procedure.

