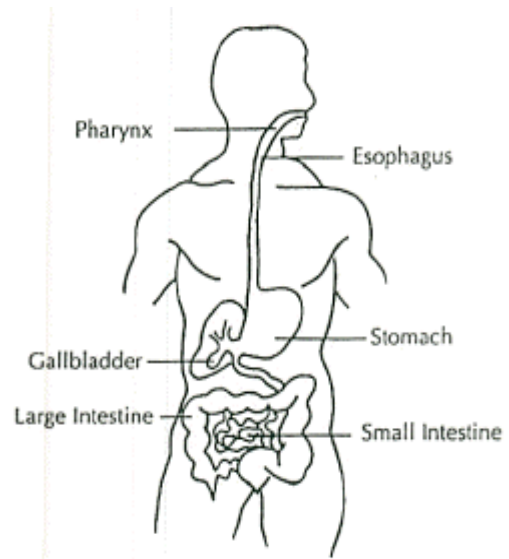


# Your Barium Enema

## WHAT IS A BARIUM ENEMA (BE) AND WHAT DOES IT SHOW?

A barium enema is an x-ray of your large intestine (large bowel). The intestines cannot be seen well on regular x-ray pictures without barium. Barium is a white liquid that is put into the bowel as an enema. It looks white on x-ray pictures and fills the part of the bowel that the doctors need to see.



## WHY AM I HAVING A BARIUM ENEMA?

Your doctor has scheduled you for a barium enema because you have some symptom that may be related to your large intestine. This might be pain, diarrhea, constipation, or blood in the stool. This x-ray gives your doctor information that may help in your diagnosis and treatment. Please let someone know if you may be pregnant; x-ray may harm an unborn child.

## HOW DO I GET READY FOR MY BARIUM ENEMA?

The large intestine must be empty to get clear pictures. It is very important that the following instructions are started the day before your scheduled x-ray.

- Buy from the store: Magnesium citrate (10 oz.) Neoloid<sup>®</sup> (4 oz.) or Caster oil (2 oz.). These are laxatives you can buy without a prescription.
- Drink only clear liquids for breakfast, lunch and supper. (Clear liquids are broth or bouillon, juices without pulp, soft drinks, Jello<sup>®</sup>, black coffee or tea).
- Drink 8 oz. of water or other clear liquids every hour from noon until midnight.
- After lunch (around 12 noon), drink the entire bottle of magnesium citrate. It will taste better if it is cold.
- At 4:00 p.m. take the entire bottle of Neoloid<sup>®</sup> with a glass of juice.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight until the x-ray is completed.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE X-RAY ROOM?

You will be asked to put on a hospital gown.

You will be given a warm water cleansing enema. This is done to complete your preparation and to be sure you are ready for the x-ray.

You will wait about one hour after the water enema before the x-ray is done so the lining of the bowel can dry. You may want to bring a book or magazine to read or handwork to do while you wait.

When it is time for your x-ray, you will be assisted onto a special x-ray table. The x-ray technologist and doctor will explain more about your barium enema. They can answer any questions you have.

The technologist will place a special enema tip into your rectum. The barium will flow into your bowel and make you feel full. It is important that you hold the enema tip and the barium inside until the x-ray is completed.

You will be asked to move into different positions. When each x-ray is taken you will be asked to hold your breath and remain as still as possible.

Sometimes, part of the x-ray machine may press on your abdomen to get better pictures. Tell someone if this is uncomfortable. We want to make you as comfortable as possible.

After the pictures are taken, most of the barium will drain into the enema bag. The tip will be removed and you will be helped to the bathroom or given a bedpan to pass any remaining barium.

## **ARE ALL BARIUM ENEMAS THE SAME?**

No. Sometimes the x-ray doctor may choose to put air through the enema tube with the barium. This makes the bowel more visible.

With this exam, the doctor may give you a small amount of medicine in your vein. This helps relax your intestines. This medicine does not make you drowsy or affect you in any other way.

The doctor may choose to use an x-ray dye other than the barium such as an iodine-type dye. This will depend on your symptoms or diagnosis.

If you have a colostomy, your doctor may put the enema tip in your stoma instead of your rectum.

The x-ray doctor will discuss your specific exam so you will know what to expect.

## **WHAT DO I DO AFTER MY BARIUM ENEMA?**

For the first one to two days after the x-ray, your bowel movements may appear white and chalky. This is normal. Ask your doctor if you should take a laxative and drink extra liquids to help clean out the barium and prevent constipation.

## **HOW LONG DOES THE EXAM TAKE?**

Including waiting time, your x-ray visit for a barium enema will take about two hours. Please understand that you may have to wait a few minutes during your x-ray while the films are being checked. It is important that the films have all the needed information before the enema tip is removed.

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The information on this Website is provided for general informational purposes only and **SHOULD NOT** be relied upon as a substitute for sound professional medical advice, evaluation or care from your physician or other qualified healthcare provider. If you have a medical problem or a health-related question, consult your physician or call Health On-Call at 336-716-2255 or 1-800-446-2255.

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