

Barium Enema Patient Information

My appointment at Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center is on _____
_____ at _____ am/pm

What is a Barium Enema?

A barium enema is an x-ray examination of your large intestine (bowel). The bowel must be thoroughly cleansed of waste material prior to the exam.

Patient Instructions:

The day before your appointment:

12:00 Noon or as close as possible have a light lunch of clear soup, two hardboiled eggs, strained fruit juices, plain Jello, coffee or tea without milk or cream or a carbonated beverage.

12:30 (one half hour after lunch)-drink entire contents of the bottle of Citrate of Magnesia.

1:00 p.m.-drink one large glass of fluid.

3:00 p.m.-take three (3) Dulcolax tablets with a large glass of water.

4:00 p.m.-drink one large glass of fluid.

5:00 p.m. (or as soon as possible)-liquid dinner of clear soup, strained fruit juices, plain Jello, coffee or tea without milk or cream or carbonated beverages.

6-9:00 p.m. and at bedtime-drink one large glass of fluid.

The day of your appointment:

Do not eat any breakfast except strained fruit juice, coffee or tea without milk or cream. Drink one large glass of fluid.

At least two hours before the exam, insert one Dulcolax suppository into your rectum. Try to wait at least 10-15 minutes before going to the bathroom even if the urge to have a bowel movement is strong.

What to Expect:

The laxatives you were given prior to this exam were to prepare your colon for this procedure. A preliminary film of your abdomen will be taken first to check that your colon has been adequately cleaned out.

An enema tip will be inserted into your rectum and is connected to a bag filled with barium. Barium is a mixture of powder and water which allows your colon to be seen on the x-ray. The radiologist watches on a TV monitor as he is filling your colon with the barium. He will use only as much barium as is necessary to see everything clearly. He will also be taking pictures to record the filling of your colon. You may experience some discomfort or a full feeling during the exam. After the radiologist has finished, the x-ray technologist will take several more films of your colon by moving you into different positions. When all of these films are completed, you will be allowed to go to the bathroom to expel the enema. Following this, one more film is taken to insure your colon is rid of most of the barium.

When You Go Home:

You may eat and drink as you wish. You may notice barium in your bowel movements for a day or two. If you are prone to constipation, you may want to take a mild laxative and drink plenty of fluids.

The radiologist will discuss the results of the examination with your doctor and your doctor will explain these results to you.

If you have any questions, please call the Imaging Center at 219-7211.