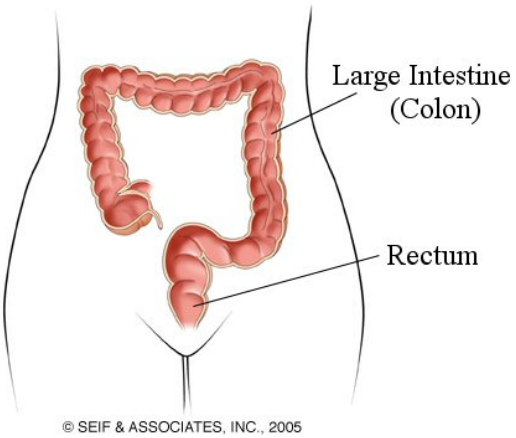
Barium Enema
(Lower GI Series)

WHAT IS A BARIUM ENEMA OR LOWER GI SERIES?
A Barium Enema is a special kind of test that looks at the inside of your large intestine (bowel or gut) using x-rays.

If you are a patient staying in the hospital, your appointment will be made for you. If you are a clinic patient, when you make the appointment for your test, tell the clerk if:

- You have dry, hard bowel movements (*constipation*).
- You have diabetes.



HOW SHOULD I GET READY FOR A BARIUM ENEMA?
Your gut must be empty to do the test. These instructions are to help clean out your bowel. You must follow these instructions very carefully. If your bowel is not empty, this test cannot be done. Then you will have to make another appointment. **Your clinic may give you a prep kit or tell you where to get one.**

THE DAY BEFORE YOUR TEST
- Eat a non-residue (low-fiber) breakfast such as:
  - Cream of Wheat.
  - Margarine.
  - Boiled or scrambled egg.
  - Jelly.
  - Bacon.
  - Plain Tea.
  - Black Coffee.
  - White Bread.

Do not eat dairy products or sugar.

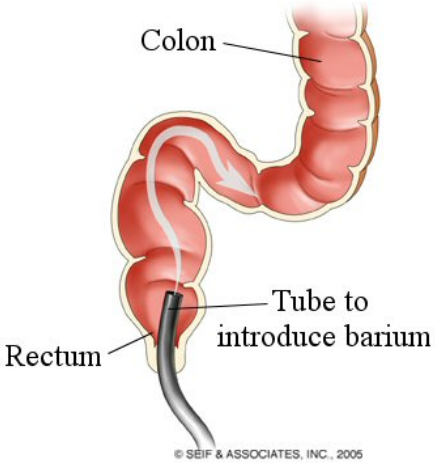
- Drink one large glass of water each hour from 1:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.
- Clear liquids only for lunch and dinner: do not eat any solid foods. You may have:
  - Clear Soup.
  - Unsweetened Fruit Juice.
  - Sugar Free Gelatin.
  - Black Coffee.
  - Plain Tea.

Do not eat any milk, cheese, cream or sugar.

- At 5:00 pm, drink the whole bottle of Magnesium Citrate. This is a strong laxative. You will have many bowel movements.
- At 8:00 pm, swallow the 3 Bisacodyl tablets with water. Do not chew the tablets. This is also a laxative.

Remember, it is very important for you to follow the instructions about what to eat and what not to eat. Drink all of the liquid prep medicine for your test, so that the stool in your bowel will be cleaned out.

THE MORNING OF YOUR TEST
- Get up at least two hours before the time of your test. Do not eat or drink anything.
- Take the foil wrapper off the suppository that is in your prep kit. Put it up into your rectum (bottom).
- You will have a bowel movement in 20-30 minutes.
- If you take insulin for your diabetes, do not take your insulin the morning of your test. Bring your insulin with you. You may take your insulin after your test is over.
- Come to the Radiology Department. Bring a photo ID and have your



medical record number with you.

HOW WILL MY TEST BE DONE?

The technologist will have you lie on a table and then take an x-ray of your belly to make sure that your bowel is completely empty. If it is, you will be asked to turn on your side and a tube will be put into your rectum.

After the tube is in, the radiologist will allow a liquid called barium to flow gently through the tube into your bowel. You may have cramping or feel like you need to have a bowel movement. Hold the Barium in until the radiologist says you may go to the bathroom.

You will be asked to lie in different positions as the X-rays are being taken. You may go to the bathroom after the X-rays have been taken.

HOW WILL I FIND OUT THE RESULTS OF MY TEST?

If you are in the hospital, the person who ordered your test will tell you about your test results when they are ready. If you are a clinic patient, you can find out your results at your next clinic appointment. Be sure to keep this important appointment. If you do not have a follow-up clinic appointment, call and schedule one with your doctor.

Easy-to-Read style based on content from Parkland Health & Hospital System, Dallas, Texas

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