

How to Prepare for Your Barium Enema

Exam Overview

The barium enema requested by your physician is an examination of your colon or large intestine. It can be very important in diagnosing disorders of the large intestine. It need not be difficult or particularly unpleasant. It does require great attention to detail.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOUR COLON BE THOROUGHLY CLEANSED FOR THIS EXAMINATION. EVEN A SMALL AMOUNT OF RETAINED STOOL MAY HIDE ABNORMALITIES. IN ADDITION, IF YOUR BOWEL IS COMPLETELY EMPTY, THE BARIUM ENEMA WILL BE LESS UNCOMFORTABLE FOR YOU.

The barium must be given by a physician in the imaging facility. The radiologists will perform the procedure with fluoroscopy and obtain a number of images using X-ray during the following enema. He will write a consultation report of his findings for the physician.

Required Preparation

1. In the morning two days prior to your examination, take 10 ounces of cold citrate of magnesium. Drink at least four glasses of fluid during the day. The citrate may produce some abdominal cramps and should produce loose bowel movements.
2. Starting the same morning, you are to eat "surgical liquids" only. The list of permitted foods and liquids are listed on the back of this page. The "surgical liquid" diet is to be your food during the two days prior to the barium enema.
3. In the morning on the day prior to your barium enema examination, take a second bottle of 10 ounces of citrate of magnesium. Again, this may produce some abdominal cramps and should produce more loose bowel movements.
4. Continue the "surgical liquid" diet until midnight before the day of your examination.
5. Do not eat or drink anything the morning of your examination.
6. At 6:30 a.m. the morning of the examination, administer a Fleet's enema according to the instruction on the package. This should produce one final bowel movement.
7. Report at the appointed time for your barium enema.

Barium Enema Exam Prep Checklist

The Day Before Your Exam

- You will need to purchase from the pharmacy the following 2 items:
 - Two 10 ounce bottles of citrate of magnesium
 - One Fleet's brand enema
- Please follow the approved surgical liquid diet the entire day before your exam. surgical liquids include:
 - ✓ Clear broth or bullion
 - ✓ Tea with sugar (no milk or cream)
 - ✓ Black coffee with sugar
 - ✓ Grape or apple juice
 - ✓ Orange, lemon or raspberry ice (not sherbet)
- Throughout the day, please make sure you drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration.

Precautions (Read Carefully!)

If you are a diabetic and require insulin, please contact your doctor before starting the preparation.

If you have an inflammatory condition of the gastrointestinal tract, such as Crohn's disease, regional enteritis or ulcerative colitis, you may want to discuss this preparation with your physician.

If you have previously had an adverse response to any of the laxatives used in this preparation, please consult your physician for substitute laxative choices.

If you suffer from severe or chronic diarrhea, you may want to discuss this preparation with your physician.

This barium enema preparation is designed for use by the "average individual". If you have any doubts or concerns about your preparation, please do not hesitate to discuss them with your own physician. Additional questions may be directed to the radiologists.