

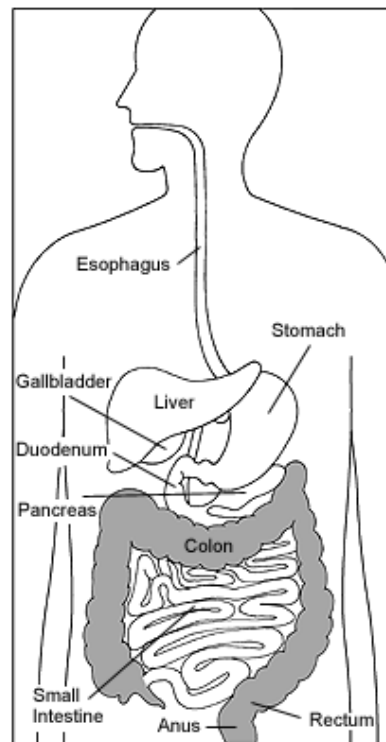
What is a Barium Enema/Lower GI Series?

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A barium enema or lower gastrointestinal (GI) series is an x-ray examination of your lower digestive tract, which includes the large intestine (colon) and rectum. A liquid called barium, which is visible on x-rays, is put by enema into the colon so that it can be seen on x-ray images.

How should I prepare for my barium enema/lower GI series?

- Your doctor will provide specific instructions for a bowel preparation (medications or agents you take to cleanse the colon prior to the exam) and dietary restrictions to follow the night before the procedure.
- It is very important for your colon to be clear for the exam. Any waste material (stool) remaining in the colon can obscure the images.
- You will be asked to remove any metal items such as jewelry, eyeglasses, and clothing with zippers or snaps.
- The metal in these items will show up on the x-ray images and may obscure them.
- You should allow approximately one hour for the examination.
- For female patients, **if there is any possibility you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, it is important to tell this to the**



Source: National Digestive Diseases Clearinghouse @ <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov>

technologist before the procedure begins.

How is the barium enema/lower GI series performed?

- You will be asked to remove your clothing and put on a hospital gown.
- The technologist will assist you onto the examination table and then will take a preliminary film of your abdomen to make sure that your colon appears clear.
- You will then be instructed to turn on your side and a lubricated enema tip will be inserted into your rectum.
- The radiologist will then control the flow of a liquid barium mixture

into your rectum and colon, which will coat the inside of your colon, making it visible on the x-ray images. You may feel the urge to have a bowel movement. Resist this urge by taking several slow, deep breaths. The enema tip is specially made to help you hold the liquid in your intestine. If you have a problem holding it, let the technologist know.

- You will then be asked to move in different positions while the radiologist examines the colon and takes x-ray images from multiple angles.
- During the procedure, you may be asked to turn in different positions and the table may tilt slightly. You may feel some pressure applied to your abdomen.
- It is very important to hold as still as you can and to hold your breath when asked in order to make the films as clear as possible.
- After the radiologist has finished taking spot films, the technologist will then take additional images of your colon.
- You will then be escorted to a rest room to evacuate the barium. When you are finished, the technologist will take a final film with your intestines empty of barium.
- After the examination is completed, you will be asked to wait for a brief period while the radiologist checks the images to make sure all of the needed information is on the films.

What should I expect after my exam?

You will pass whitish colored bowel movements for a few days after the test due to the barium. Unless you are on fluid restriction, you should drink plenty of fluids to avoid constipation. Speak with your doctor about taking a laxative if you tend to get constipated.

Is a barium enema/lower GI series safe?

X-rays are a form of energy that exists in nature. The x-ray machine produces an x-ray beam which is carefully limited to the body part being examined. No radiation remains in your body after the examination.

Female patients, if there is any possibility you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, it is important to tell this to the technologist before the x-ray.

Speak with the x-ray technologist if you have questions or concerns regarding your barium enema/lower GI series. A formal report will be sent to your doctor within days following your procedure. Your doctor will speak with you regarding the results.

Source: American College of Radiology. Retrieved 04/2007 from radiologyinfo.org

4/2007