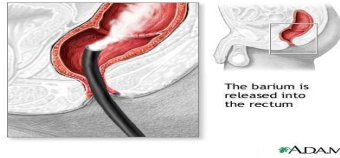


# UNITED HOSPITAL CENTER PATIENT EDUCATION

## BARIUM ENEMA



Your physician has referred you to the Diagnostic Services Department at United Hospital Center for a Barium Enema (BE). This is an x-ray examination of your lower digestive tract.

For the exam to be successful, your lower digestive tract must be clean. Therefore, you must take a preparation consisting of laxatives, because any residue in the lower digestive tract will show up on x-rays and could be mistaken for an abnormality.

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and then taken into a radiographic room, where you will be given a description of the exam. You will also be asked for a history regarding why you are having the exam performed. You will then be asked to lie on the x-ray table, so you can be prepared for the exam. As you lie on your side, a lubricated enema tip will be inserted into your rectum and liquid barium will be released into your bowel. The barium allows your colon to be visualized.

As the barium fills the colon, you will feel like you need to move your bowels. The tip of the enema tubing is specially designed to help you hold in the barium. Let the technologist know if you are having trouble retaining the tip. Using the fluoroscope, the radiologist can watch the barium flow into your colon. While this is happening, you will be asked to turn from side to side and to hold several different positions. At times, pressure may be applied to your abdomen and the table may be tilted slightly. When each x-ray is taken, you must remain perfectly still and hold your breath. In some cases, the radiologist will allow some of the barium liquid to drain back into the bag. He will then inflate your colon with air and take more pictures.

When the radiologist is finished, the technologist will take several additional x-rays. After these films are obtained, the enema tip will be removed and you will be allowed to go to the restroom and expel the barium. If you cannot walk to the restroom, you will be given a bedpan. When you have finished the technologist will take a final film of your empty colon.

After the exam, your stool may look slightly white for a day or two. This is due to the barium. If you're having difficulty getting your bowels to move, tell your nurse or doctor and a laxative may be prescribed for you.

**LENGTH:** Approximately 1 hour

If you are pregnant, or think you might be, tell your doctor and the technologist **BEFORE** your exam.

**DISCLAIMER:** The content contained in this patient education is presented solely with the intent of providing public service information on health and health-related issues. This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult your physician or other qualified health provider prior to utilizing any of the information presented in this patient education. UHC makes no warranty, representation or guaranty as to the content, accuracy, timeliness or completeness of the information presented in this patient education or that the information may be relied upon for any reason.

Revised: October 2009