

# Care Gram

## Barium Enema Test

Date of Test: \_\_\_\_\_ Test Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### Welcome

Welcome to the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Radiology Department. Your doctor has requested a test of your colon called a barium enema. This is a test of your lower digestive tract. The test is performed by a radiologist, a doctor specializing in medical diagnosis by X-ray, and a radiographer, who is certified in the use of X-ray equipment.

### How the Test Works

A barium enema is an X-ray exam that uses a contrast media called barium sulfate. The contrast is introduced into the colon through a soft, plastic rectal tube system. The barium is needed to help visualize the large intestine also known as the colon.

### Allowing Time

The test typically takes less than an hour, but you should allow an hour and a half for your entire visit.

### Bowel Preparation:

Buy the following over-the-counter items at the store:

1. One 238-gram bottle of Miralax®
2. Two Dulcolax® tablets (5 mg tablets)
3. One 64-ounce bottle of Gatorade® (yellow, clear, or green) – If you are diabetic, substitute Crystal Light Lemonade®

Mix the bottle of Miralax with 64 ounces of Gatorade or Crystal Light Lemonade and place in the refrigerator to chill.

### The Day Before Your Test:

Your colon/rectum must be empty. Do not eat solid food or drink milk products. Follow the guidelines listed below.

Breakfast:	Your choice of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear broth or bouillon</li><li>• Clear fruit juices without pulp such as apple, white grape, and lemonade</li><li>• Clear drinks such as water, lemon-lime soda, or lemon-lime Gatorade</li><li>• Black coffee or plain tea</li><li>• Plain gelatin</li><li>• No solids or dairy products</li></ul>
10:00 a.m.	Drink 1 glass (8 ounces) of water.
11:00 a.m.	Drink 1 glass (8 ounces) of water.



**Licking Memorial  
Health Systems**

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- 12:00 Noon: Your choice of the following:
- Clear broth or bouillon
  - Clear fruit juices without pulp such as apple, white grape, and lemonade
  - Clear drinks such as water, lemon-lime soda, and lemon-lime Gatorade®
  - Black coffee or plain tea
  - Plain gelatin
  - No solids or dairy products
- 1:00 p.m. Drink 1 glass (8 ounces) of water.
- 2:00 p.m. Drink 1 glass (8 ounces) of water.
- 3:00 p.m. Take 2 Dulcolax tablets and drink 2 glasses of water.
- 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Begin drinking the Miralax/Gatorade mixture. Drink an 8-ounce glass of the mixture every 13 to 20 minutes until the entire 64 ounces is finished. Then, drink a glass of water.

Do not eat or drink anything after Midnight.

### Day of Procedure

Do not eat or drink anything the morning of the test.

### Your Role

1. Please follow your doctor's instructions to prepare for the test. You must have a clean colon to get the best results.
2. Relax during the test. It is important to hold your breath when asked.
3. If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, be sure to let your doctor know this before the test begins.
4. Take your prescribed medications. If you are a diabetic and take insulin, do not take insulin until after the test.

### Registering

Please report directly to the Registration area on the LMH First Floor. Come to this area 20 minutes before your scheduled test time.

### During the Barium Enema Test

- For the test, you will be asked to remove your clothes and be given a gown to wear.
- The radiographer will ask you questions about your symptoms and medical history and explain what you should expect during the exam.
- You will lie on the exam table and an X-ray will be taken of your abdomen. The radiologist will review the X-ray to see your colon is prepped enough for the exam. If the colon is not empty enough, your test will be rescheduled, and you will need to complete the prep again.
- If the test can continue, you will be asked to roll onto your left side, and a lubricated enema tip will be inserted into the rectum. As the exam takes place, the radiographer will explain the process and offer relaxing techniques, such as slow steady breaths.
- A small balloon at the end of the enema tip will be inflated to help keep it in place. The balloon may add pressure to the rectum. Do your best not to bear down.

- The radiologist will be called to the exam room and the barium will be administered from a bag through tubing connected to the enema tip.
- As the colon fills with barium the radiologist will take images. You will be asked to change position frequently. Changing position allows the radiologist to see and image all the different areas of the colon and help coat the lining of the colon with barium. The radiographer will help you change position as much as needed. You will also be asked to hold your breath at times, when the radiologist takes the images.
- Air may be introduced into the colon. If so, once the barium has reached and coated the inner lining of the colon, some of it will be drained back into the bag. The radiologist will then pump small amounts of air through the enema tip. This could cause some abdominal cramping.
- The radiologist will leave the room once the needed images are taken. The radiographer will capture additional standard X-ray images.
- You will then roll to your left side and the radiographer will deflate the balloon on the enema tip and remove it from the rectum. You will be escorted to the nearest restroom to empty the colon. When finished, 1 to 2 additional images will be taken to evaluate how much, if any, barium remains. The radiographer will provide you with after-visit instructions and the test is complete.

**After the Test**

The barium may make your stools a little white for 1 to 2 days. If you tend to get constipated, ask your doctor about a laxative. Drink plenty of fluids to help flush the barium out of your system. If you have limited fluids, please check with your doctor about how much to drink. You may eat a regular diet after the test unless your doctor tells you differently.

**Finding Out the Results**

The radiologist will interpret the test and give the findings to your doctor. Your doctor will talk to you about the results.

**Reminder**

- If you have questions about the test, please call (220) 564-4710.
- Go to the Registration area on the LMH First Floor, 20 minutes before the test.