

# 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

Usually, X-rays pass through the soft tissues of the body, such as your lower digestive tract. For this test, you will receive a special medication called a barium contrast agent through a rectal tube to help your lower digestive tract appear on the X-ray as clearly as your bones do. The barium coats the walls of your lower digestive tract and blocks the X-rays. This casts a shadow that is displayed on a device called a fluoroscope. It also shows up on the image.

### Allowing Time

The test typically takes less than an hour, but you should allow more time 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:

- Clear broth or bouillon
- Clear fruit juices without pulp such as apple, white grape, and lemonade
- Clear drinks such as water, lemon-lime soda, lemon-lime Gatorade®
- Black coffee or plain tea
- Plain gelatin
- No solids or dairy products



**Licking Memorial  
Health Systems**

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1616-0503  
1/11/2023  
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10:00 a.m.	Drink 1 glass (8 ounces) of water.
11:00 a.m.	Drink 1 glass (8 ounces) of water.
12:00 Noon:	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, and lemon-lime Gatorade®</li><li>• Black coffee or plain tea</li><li>• Plain gelatin</li><li>• No solids or dairy products</li></ul>
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 on 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 wear a gown and robe. The radiographer may ask you a few questions. If you have a problem with controlling your bowels, please tell the staff at this time.
- You will lie on a table and have an abdominal X-ray first. This will show how well your colon is cleaned out for the test.
- The radiologist will compare the X-ray to the diagnosis from your doctor. The radiologist will decide if you will need a barium enema with air contrast, or just a regular barium enema test.
- For the test, you will lie on your side. A lubricated enema tip will be inserted into your rectum and the liquid barium mixture will go into your bowel. The barium allows your colon to show up in the X-ray.

- Next, a piece of equipment called a fluoroscope will be placed on top of you. As the barium fills the colon, the radiologist will take pictures at different times. You will feel like you need to have a bowel movement as your colon fills. The enema tip is specially designed to help you hold the barium. Please let the radiologist know if you are having trouble holding the tip in.
- While each X-ray is taken, you must be still and hold your breath. You may hear snapping and sliding sounds from the image detector moving into place.
- The radiologist will ask you to turn from side to side while watching the barium flow into your colon. You will be asked to hold different positions. At times, pressure may be applied to your abdomen, and the table may be tilted slightly.
- You will then be allowed to go to the bathroom and expel the barium. Sometimes, an image will be taken of your empty colon.

**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 something else.

**Finding Out the Results**

The radiologist will study 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.