

Barium Enema

Preparation Instructions

A barium enema is an x-ray examination of your large bowel (colon) after it is filled with barium and air, administered by insertion of an enema tip, via the rectum. This procedure has been ordered by your physician. The bowel prep can be purchased at your local drug store or pharmacy and is now covered by the Ontario Benefit Program. To have a successful exam, it is imperative to have a clean bowel.

Preferred Bowel Preparation

- Bisacodyl Laxative (such as Dulcolax) - 4 tablets (5 mg each)
- 1 Box Pico-Salax – **Please refer to package insert for warnings and precautions for use.** The box contains 2 packets of bowel preparation. You will need to take them both.
- Pico-Salax may cause loss of electrolytes. Please ask your pharmacist for suggestions of clear liquids to replace loss of electrolytes.

On the day before the examination:

1. **NO SOLID FOOD**, only clear liquids the day prior to procedure (Clear Liquids: apple juice, jell-o, chicken broth, Gatorade, popsicles, water, ice, black tea and coffee, pop decaffeinated, if possible, etc.). **NO MILK** products or other liquid you cannot see through.
2. At 8:00 am, 4 Bisacodyl (Dulcolax) tablets (5 mg each) by mouth with 1-2 glasses of water.
3. a) Take 1st packet of Pico-Salax at about 11:00 am – mix it in a 5 ounce (150 ml) **mug** of cold water. Rarely mixture may heat up, let it cool before drinking. You must continue to stir while drinking the mug of Pico-Salax to ensure all the laxative has dissolved. **Following each sachet, drink 1.5 to 2 litres of a variety of clear fluids* over 4 hours. DO NOT DRINK JUST WATER ALONE**
b) Take 2nd packet of Pico-Salax at about 3:00 p.m. – mixing it the same as the first packet.

You may drink additional CLEAR LIQUIDS until midnight. Recommended clear fluids include any fluid that you can see through that is not red or purple such as: sports drinks (e.g. Gatorade), Pedialyte, Gastrolyte, Kool-Aid, clear broth (chicken, vegetable or beef with no noodles, meat or vegetables), fruit juices (e.g. apple, white (not red) cranberry, white (not purple) grape), tea or coffee (black, sweetened to taste, no milk, cream or soy), clear sodas (e.g. ginger ale), plain Jell-O (not red or purple), Popsicle (not red or purple) and water.

Diabetics can use a fibre free supplement/meal replacement.

Most people will have 3-6 watery bowel movements. You will be making several trips to the bathroom throughout the afternoon.

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Important Information for the Day of the Test

Day of barium enema examination:

- Continue with no solid food.
- You may drink 1-2 cups clear liquids the day of the examination.
- You may take your required medication as usual, except if it must be taken with solid food.
- Diabetic patients may have half a slice of toast on the morning of the barium enema to prevent insulin reaction. If you are diabetic, please request a morning appointment.

Length of barium enema examination

This examination usually takes one hour to complete.

What to expect

The examination is done in a semi-darkened room. The exam's progress is viewed on a TV monitor. After imaging is complete, you will be allowed to go to a nearby washroom.

After the barium enema examination

Drink large volumes of fluid after your x-ray examination for the next few days and resume a normal diet.

If you have questions or concerns, call 519 646-6035 and ask for the gastric technologist.