

X - Ray Lower GI

Appointment Information

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Address: _____

Notes: _____

About

Lower gastrointestinal (GI) tract radiography, also called a lower GI or barium enema, is an x-ray examination of the large intestine, also known as the colon. This examination evaluates the right or ascending colon, the transverse colon, the left or descending colon, the sigmoid colon and the rectum. The appendix and a portion of the distal small intestine may also be included.

The lower GI uses a special form of x-ray called fluoroscopy and a contrast material, also called barium to make it possible to see internal organs in motion. An x-ray of the lower GI tract can help detect:

- Ulcers
- Tumors
- Inflammation
- Hiatal hernias
- Scarring
- Blockages
- Abnormalities of the muscular wall of GI tract

During the x-ray of your lower GI tract, the technologist will inject the barium into your colon which in turn will give you're the sensation that you need to move your bowel. You may feel abdominal pressure or even minor cramping. Most people tolerate the mild discomfort easily. The tip of the enema tube is specially designed to help you hold in the barium. If you are having trouble, let the technologist or radiologist know.

During the imaging process, 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.

After the examination, you may be given a laxative or enema to wash the barium out of your system. You can resume a regular diet and take orally administered medications unless told otherwise by your doctor. You may be able to return to a normal diet and activities immediately after the examination. You will be encouraged to drink additional water for 24 hours after the examination.

Your stools may appear white for a day or so as your body clears the barium liquid from your system. Some people experience constipation after a barium enema. If you do not have a bowel movement for more than two days after your exam or are unable to pass gas rectally, call your physician promptly. You may need an enema or laxative to assist in eliminating the barium.

Preparations

You will be given detailed instructions on how to prepare for your x-ray of your lower GI tract when you schedule your exam.

You should inform your radiologist of any medications you are taking and if you have any allergies, especially to barium or iodinated contrast materials. Also inform your radiologist about recent illnesses or other medical conditions.

On the day before the procedure you will be asked not to eat, and to drink only clear liquids like juice, tea, black coffee, cola or broth, and to avoid dairy products. After midnight, you should not eat or drink anything. For adults (but not usually in children), it is important that your colon be completely empty for the procedure. You may also be instructed to take a laxative (in either pill or liquid form) and to use an over-the-counter enema preparation the night before the examination and possibly a few hours before the procedure. You can take your usual prescribed oral medications with limited amounts of water. Be sure to follow the instructions you are given.

You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and to wear a gown during the exam. You may also be asked to remove jewelry, removable dental appliances, eye glasses and any metal objects or clothing that might interfere with the x-ray images.

Women should always inform their radiologist and x-ray technologist if there is any possibility that they are pregnant.



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