

Getting a Barium Enema

What is a barium enema?

- A barium enema is a study of your child's colon using a special kind of X-ray (fluoroscopy) and liquid (contrast) that is administered through the rectum.
- A barium enema is done to determine why your child is having difficulties with bowel movements.

What happens during a barium enema?

Part 1: Getting ready

- The technologist will ask some questions about your child and review the test with you.
- Your child will take off all their clothes and change into a hospital gown.
- Your child will lie on the table on their left side. Your child will bring their knees to their stomach.
- The radiologist will insert a small tube into your child's rectum.
- The radiologist will tape the small tube to your child's bottom to ensure that it does not move during the study.
- This tube is connected to a container of contrast, which is the special water that will show up on the photos.

Part 2: Taking the pictures

- The radiologist will move a large camera over your child.
- The radiologist will take pictures as the contrast moves through the tube into the rectum and colon.
- The radiologist will help move your child to their back and their left and right side to take additional images.
- Once the pictures are done, the radiologist will remove the tape and the small tube from your child's rectum.
- The radiologist will either ask your child to use the bathroom or ask you to put your child back into a diaper until they have a bowel movement.
- Additional photos are taken after your child has a bowel movement.

To schedule a preparation/education session:



A child life specialist (CLS) can help support your child during their barium enema by explaining it in developmentally appropriate language, suggesting possible coping strategies, and helping to distract them during the test. If you would like to speak

to a child life specialist prior to your child's radiology appointment, please email

radiologychildlife@mountsinai.org



**Mount
Sinai**

*Kravis Children's
Hospital*

How can I prepare my child?

Be sure to follow the prep instructions given to you when you schedule the appointment.

Infants (up to 12 months old)

- Bring comfort items such as a pacifier, blanket, or favorite toy.
- Remember crying is a healthy and normal way for infants to express their emotions.
- You are your child's biggest comfort.
- You may bring a bottle of milk or other liquid which may be offered for additional comfort.

Toddlers (one to two years old)

- Start preparing your child the day before with simple words.
- Tell your child that they will have pictures taken so that the doctor can learn more about their body.
- Tell your child that a technologist will touch the area where they poop and that it is okay.
- Reassure your child that you will be there for the pictures.
- Toddlers want to be independent and make their own choices, so you can ask them what comfort items they will bring.

Preschoolers (three to five years old)

- Start preparing your child one to three days before.
- Tell your child why they are having the pictures taken.
- You can relate it to any symptoms they might be experiencing.
- You can tell your child that to help get ready for the pictures, a technologist will place a very small, soft tube into the opening where their poop comes out.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.

School age and up (six years old and up)

- Prepare your child at least a few days in advance.
- Tell your child why they are having the pictures taken. You can relate it to any symptoms they might be experiencing.
- Speak to your child about what they might see, hear, and feel during each step of the scan.
- You can tell your child that to help get ready for the pictures, a technologist will place a very small, soft tube into the opening where their poop comes out.
- Talk to your child about different ways they can cope including how they want to be distracted and if they want to be told each step of the test.
- Encourage your child to ask questions

How can I help as a caregiver?

- Caregivers are encouraged to be with their child during the scan, though there are some exceptions. Women who may be pregnant cannot be in the fluoroscopy room during the procedure.
- You can encourage your child to take deep breaths and squeeze your hands when the catheter is inserted. The more relaxed your child is the less discomfort they should feel.
- We encourage caregivers to help contribute to a calming environment as your child will look to you for emotional cues.
- During the pictures you can help distract your child with a show on a tablet, reading a book, or talking with them.



**Mount
Sinai**

*Kravis Children's
Hospital*