



# Contrast Enema



## What is a contrast enema?

A contrast enema is a test that looks at your child's colon (this is the large bowel or intestine). This test may be done for a variety of reasons, which will be explained to you before the test begins.

## What kinds of contrasts are used?

Talk with your child's doctor about which type of contrast your child will have and why.

### Barium enema

Some tests are done using X-rays and a contrast agent called barium. The barium is put into your child's rectum and can be seen on X-rays as it travels through your child's colon.

### Water soluble contrast

Other tests are done using X-rays and a water soluble contrast agent. The contrast is put into your child's rectum and can be seen on X-rays as it travels through your child's colon.

### **How do I prepare my child for the test?**

- Your child's age, diagnosis or the reason for the test helps determine how you should prepare your child.
- Follow the instructions that you get when you schedule the test. Be sure to ask questions if there is anything that you don't understand.
- If your child is allergic to barium, you will be given additional instructions.
- Dress your child in clothes that are easy to take off. Your child will be given a gown to change into for the test.
- This test can be very uncomfortable for many children. We offer Child Life services that may help. Child life specialists work with your child and family to help reduce anxiety and adjust to the hospital experience. When you call to schedule the exam, tell the scheduler if you want a child life specialist to help your child.

### **How do we check in for the appointment?**

- **Arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment.** Being late can affect other appointments and can delay your appointment.
- Check in at the level 6 registration desk inside the Ocean entrance. After you register, you will be directed to the Radiology reception area.
- Females 12 years and older will be asked to provide a urine sample for pregnancy screening.
- If you will be late or have questions, call Radiology at 206-987-2089.

### **What happens during the test?**

- The technologist will explain the test to both you and your child.
- We will insert a tube into your child's rectum to get the contrast in their body. The length and width of the tube used depends your child's size and age. The tube will be connected to a bag containing the contrast.
- A special doctor, called a radiologist, will move the X-ray camera over your child while the contrast goes into their body. The camera will not touch your child.
- While the contrast is flowing into your child's colon, the radiologist will roll your child from side to side in order to get good X-rays.
- The tube will be removed and your child will be able to go to the bathroom or be put in a diaper until they have a bowel movement.
- After your child has a bowel movement, more pictures may be taken.
- The whole test takes about 45 minutes.
- Parents may stay with their child during the test. Please make other arrangements for siblings.
- Women who are pregnant or may be pregnant will be asked to leave the room during the test. Please make sure to bring someone else with you who can stay with your child during the test, if needed.

### To Learn More

- Radiology  
206-987-2089
- Ask your child's nurse  
or doctor
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask  
your child's nurse.
- From outside the  
hospital, call the  
toll-free Family  
Interpreting Line  
1-866-583-1527.  
Tell the interpreter  
the name or extension  
you need.

## What happens after the test?

### For children who have a barium enema:

Give your child extra fluids after the test because the barium may cause constipation. If you have any problems or questions about constipation, call your primary healthcare provider.

When your child does have a bowel movement, it may look white or grayish. The barium can cause this discoloration.

### For children who have a water-soluble contrast enema:

There are no special instructions for children after having an enema with water-soluble contrast.

## Does this exam use radiation?

Yes, your child will be exposed to a small amount of radiation. We understand that radiation dose is a special concern for children. To minimize how much radiation your child is exposed to, we customize the x-rays based on your child's age, weight and area to be examined.

If you have questions about the exam and whether it is needed, please contact the doctor who ordered the contrast enema for your child.

## How do we get the results?

The images from your child's radiology procedure are typically reviewed by a radiologist within 24 hours and a report will be sent to the doctor who ordered the test. If you have a clinic or doctor appointment scheduled, the doctor will review the results with you then. If you do not have a visit scheduled, you should call your child's doctor for the results.