Information for Patients having a Barium Enema

Please read this entire leaflet carefully
This leaflet gives you instructions on bowel preparation which is required to completely clear your bowel of waste material before your test.

We understand that taking any kind of bowel preparation can be uncomfortable, inconvenient and tiring. We want to ensure however that your test goes well and urge you to follow these bowel instructions closely.

What is a Barium Enema Examination?
A Barium Enema is an examination to look at your large bowel (colon).

What preparation is required?
Laxatives
Two sachets of Picolax laxatives have been sent to you to prepare you for your barium enema, which must be taken the day before your examination (see instructions below). It is important that your bowel is free from faeces, so it is extremely important that you also follow the diet plan we give you.

The laxative will make you empty your bowel with urgency. It is advisable to stay close to a toilet once you start taking the preparation. You may get a headache if you do not drink enough water so make sure you drink more fluid than normal. You should keep drinking enough fluid whilst taking this medication to prevent dehydration, about a small glass full (250 ml) every hour while awake. If you develop the symptoms of dehydration and cannot increase your fluid intake, then you should seek medical attention. These symptoms include dizziness or light-headedness (particularly on standing) thirst of reduced urine production

Four (4) days before the examination
Eat only the following low residue diet

Low residue diet – foods allowed:
- **Meats**: light meals of white fish or chicken (steamed, poached or grilled)
- **Dairy products**: milk and milk drinks, butter and margarine, eggs and cheese, plain/flavoured yoghurt (with NO added fruit or nuts), ice cream.
- **Carbohydrates/starchy foods**: Plain pasta (not wholemeal) white rice, white bread, cream crackers, potatoes (without skins) eg mashed or chips
- **Breakfast cereals**: Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Frosties, Special K
- **Puddings, cakes and sweets**: Rice, tapioca, semolina, cornflour, custard, jelly, plain biscuits, plain cakes.
- **Drinks**: Any type of drink is suitable that does not contain fibre bits (ie. If drinking fruit
Foods to avoid:
- FRUIT including dried fruit and fruit smoothies, fruit peel/rind and pips in jam, marmalade or cakes
- VEGETABLES AND SALAD. Strain soups containing vegetables
- BREAD. Wholemeal, whole-wheat, granary, brown or high fibre white or rye bread
- Coarse cereals e.g. All Bran, Weetabix (avoid bran)
- Nuts, seeds, pips
- High fibre biscuits. Digestive biscuits and those containing oats, bran, dried fruit etc
- High fibre crispbreads and whole-wheat crackers
- Pickles, tough meat, sausages, herrings and any fish with fine bones

The day before your appointment

8.00 am - Take the first sachet of Picolax, mixed in 150mls of water.
No solid food should be eaten at least two (2) hours before taking Picolax

8.30am – Breakfast (low residue diet)

10.30am – Tea/Coffee (with milk and sugar if required).

1pm – Lunch. (skip lunch if possible otherwise small amount of low residue diet)

No solid food, milk or dairy products allowed now until after your procedure. Drink plenty of clear fluids, about a small glass full (250 ml) every hour while awake.

3pm – Take the second sachet of Picolax mixed in 150mls of water.

From now until your examination only water, clear soup and jelly is allowed. NO SOLID FOOD IS ALLOWED.

If you have not had a bowel movement by 4pm on the day before your appointment please contact us on one of the numbers provided at the end of this leaflet.

Possible side effects include nausea and allergic reactions. If you have severe vomiting or abdominal pain and distension you must contact us on one of the telephone numbers below or contact your GP for advice

What does the procedure involve?
- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and remove your underwear. You may bring your own dressing gown to wear over the top.
- You will then be brought into the x-ray room where we will check your identity and ask you to lie on your left side.
- A small flexible tube will then be inserted into your anus (back passage)
- Barium liquid will then be run into your bowel through the tube. This may make you feel
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as though you need to go to the toilet.

- After a few minutes most of the liquid will be run out of the bowel, leaving a coating on the bowel.

- Some air will be put in through your anus which will make you feel bloated and may be a little uncomfortable.

- You may be given an injection into your arm to relax your bowel and reduce any discomfort. The injection won’t make you drowsy it should only take away some of the discomfort associated with the air. If the injection is not given, the procedure may be more uncomfortable and it may make it difficult to interpret your pictures.

- You will be asked to move into a number of positions to coat the entire large bowel with barium. We will help you to do this if needed.

- Several X ray pictures of your large bowel will be taken

- Straight after the procedure you will go to a toilet to pass any residual air and barium. You may notice barium is also passed later on.

After the procedure you may eat and drink normally. We recommend you eat plenty of fibre (bran flakes, fruit and vegetables) for the next few days and drink plenty of fluids. This will help to evacuate any remaining barium.

What if I am diabetic?
If you are diabetic you should telephone the Radiology Department and inform us, so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Our telephone numbers are:

What if I could be pregnant?
If you are a female between the ages of 12 and 55 years, this examination must be performed within 28 days of the first day of your last menstrual period. Please inform the department if your examination falls after this time or if there is a possibility that you may be pregnant.

Can I still take my medication?
You must stop taking iron tablets for three days prior to the test. No other medication should be taken within one (1) hour of taking Picolax. Patients on immune-suppression for organ transplant should seek advice of their doctor before taking oral bowel cleansing agent. Patient on oral contraceptive pill should seek alternative precaution during the week following taking oral bowel cleansing agent

When will I get my results?
If your GP has sent you for the test the results will be sent to them. If you have been referred from a Hospital Consultant, the results will go back to them and you will be contacted with a clinic appointment.

Where can I find more information and contact phone numbers?
If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the hospital where you are
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attending for the examination.

Birmingham Heartlands Hospital 0121 424 4251
Solihull Hospital 0121 424 9933
Good Hope Hospital 0121 424 5271

The following web site may also be helpful: The Royal College of Radiologists www.rcr.ac.uk

Our commitment to confidentiality
We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will always ask you for your consent if we need to use information that identifies you. We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Additional Sources of Information:
You can go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx

You may want to visit one of our Health Information Centres located in:
• Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Tel: 0121 424 2280
• Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946
or contact us by email: healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk.

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Dear Patient
We welcome your views on what you liked and suggestions for how things could be improved at this hospital. If you would like to tell us and others about your experience please make your comments through one of the following sites:-

• NHS Choice:- www.nhs.uk
• Patient Opinion:- www.patientopinion.org.uk
• I want great care:- www.iwantgreatcare.org (Here you can leave feedback about your
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Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about this hospital or how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the NHS Choice or Patient Opinion sites.

If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or treatment, or anything you do not understand or wish to know more about, write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.