

BARIUM MEAL

Patient Information



What is a Barium Meal?

A Barium meal is a special X-ray procedure that helps detect abnormalities in your oesophagus, stomach and small intestine. The procedure uses a contrast medium (barium sulphate) to get clear X-ray images. The contrast agent allows the radiologist to visualize the wall of the digestive tract.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

- Take the laxatives as prescribed by your doctor after an early dinner.
- Laxatives may cause diarrhoea. Take advice from your doctor before taking the laxative if you already have diarrhoea.
- Patients taking Ispaghul Husk, or a substitute, should stop taking it at least three (3) days before the procedure.
- Only eat food that is allowed on the diet instruction sheet that was provided to you at the time of appointment, for two days before the procedure.
- Do not eat anything for up to 8 hours before the procedure.

What will happen during the procedure?

- You will be asked to drink at least two cups of barium suspension at the start of the procedure.
- Some X-ray images will be taken as the liquid passes through the oesophagus into the stomach and small bowel.
- After 15-30 minutes of barium intake, a series of abdominal X-ray images will be taken to check the progress of barium through the digestive system.
- As the liquid passes through the large intestine, more images will be taken.
- The entire imaging process may take anywhere between one and four hours to complete.

Will it hurt?

The procedure is not painful overall. However, the taste of barium (contrast medium) may be slightly unpleasant, and the bad taste takes a little while to leave.

What will happen after the procedure?

- You can eat and drink normally after the procedure.
- Drink plenty of water/fluids to drain the barium sulphate from your bowel.
- Do not worry if you have white stools for a few days after the procedure. The change in stool colour may be due to contrast material.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, please call your doctor:

- Unable to pass stool or gas within two days of the procedure.
- Have fever after the procedure.
- Have pain in the abdomen after the procedure.

Please note the following:

- Bring your doctor's prescription and previous medical/radiology records on the day of your procedure.
- Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment for registration and other formalities. Late arrival may lead to delay/rescheduling of your examination.
- Please inform your doctor if you have any allergies or have had a bad reaction to any procedure in the past.
- If you are pregnant or if there is a chance you might be pregnant, inform your doctor before the procedure. Your doctor may reschedule or cancel the procedure.
- Patients requiring urgent care may be given priority. This may result in a delay in starting your procedure. Your cooperation in this regard is highly appreciated.
- It is advisable to bring an attendant with you.
- If you have any queries or need to reschedule your appointment, please contact us at 021-111-911-911.