

Barium Meal

Patient Information

What is a Barium Meal?

A barium meal is an examination of the oesophagus, stomach and small intestine. The examination demonstrates the anatomy of these regions and also gives an indication of their functions.

Why do you need a Barium Meal?

There are various reasons for the procedure, your doctor would need to explain why it is necessary for you.

Prior to the Procedure

1. You will need to prepare for the examination by fasting (not eating or drinking) for 6 hours before the appointment. This will ensure that the stomach is empty, as any food or fluid taken before the examination can give misleading results. However small sips of water may be taken with essential medication at least 2 hours prior to your appointment.
2. Cease taking Mylanta and Zantac 48 hours before the examination.
3. If you are diabetic please inform the staff when making your appointment. This will allow us to make appropriate arrangements for you.
4. If you suffer from glaucoma (raised pressure in the eyes) please inform the staff prior to your examination.
5. Bring your referral and any previous relevant x-rays.
6. Bring your Medicare Card, Pension/Healthcare Card, Veteran's Affairs Card and insurance details if applicable.

The Procedure

1. A member of staff will explain the procedure and answer any questions you may have.
2. You will be taken to a change room where you will be asked to remove some of your clothing and put on a gown.
3. The examination lasts about 30 minutes unless your doctor also wants the small intestine examined, which may take a further 1-2 hours depending on the speed of the fluid through the bowel.
4. You will be given some fluids to drink, these will include a chalky-tasting liquid (barium sulphate) and other small amounts of fluids or tablets. These fluids fill the stomach with gas to show the stomach lining is coated well with barium and filled with air.
5. During the procedure you may be given a small injection to slow the movements of your stomach to obtain clearer films. This may cause blurred vision for about 15-20 minutes.
6. You will be asked to move into various positions, both lying and standing to allow x-rays to be taken of all parts of the stomach and small bowel.
7. After the procedure you may experience constipation for a few days. Drinking more fluids than usual is helpful, however, if symptoms persist a mild laxative may be useful.

Results

A radiologist (a specialised doctor trained to read barium x-rays) will view the images and write a report for your doctor.

Questions

This brochure is provided to help you understand the Barium Meal procedure.

If you have any questions prior to your examination, you can speak with a member of our staff by phoning Patient Services on **132 336**

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