

Your Child's Care

The Le Bonheur radiology staff wants to care for your child's physical and emotional needs. The information in this brochure will answer questions you or your child may have about the scheduled barium enema, and help prepare your child for the test.

Your child's doctor can also answer any questions you may have, or you can call the Le Bonheur radiology department where your child will have the test to get more information.

What is a barium enema?

A barium enema helps the doctor see how the large intestine is working. The large intestine includes the colon and the rectum (where stool is kept before excretion). This test takes about 30-45 minutes.

How is a barium enema done?

1. We will take you and your child to an exam room. Your child will put on the hospital gown.
2. Your child will lie on a table. There will also be a large X-ray camera.
3. We will ask your child to lie on his/her side, and pull their knees up close to the stomach.
4. We will gently slide a tube into your child's rectum. The tube will have a gel on it for less discomfort. The tube will feel like a rectal thermometer to your child.
5. The tube will be attached to a bag of barium (liquid that makes it possible to see the colon with the X-ray).
6. We will let some barium pass into your child's rectum and colon, and watch the television screen to see how the colon and rectum are working.
7. We may push on your child's abdomen to get a better view, or may ask your child to change positions.
8. Your child will begin to feel an urge to move his/her bowels. After some X-rays are taken, you may take your child to the bathroom.

9. After your child has had a bowel movement, the technologist will take a few more X-rays of the large intestine without the barium.
10. A doctor trained in reading X-rays will study the pictures and send the results to your child's doctor.

How do I tell my child about the barium enema?

Please talk to your child before you come to Le Bonheur. It will make the procedure easier for you and your child. Assure your child that any discomfort will only last a few minutes, and that the test will not hurt.

Tell your child that the test is helping the doctor find out how his/her body is working inside. Explain that it is important to remain still during the test. You may want to practice being still and relaxing with your child before you come for the test. Your child may want to imagine being in a favorite place during the test.

If your child is concerned about being touched or looked at by someone, please explain that we will try to keep his/her body covered as much as possible during the test, and that touching helps find out how his/her body is working.

For infants, the test seems to mean mostly a change in routine feeding and/or sleeping schedule. You can help by being with your infant as much as possible. Bring along your child's favorite blanket or toy. If your child must not eat before the test, feed him/her just before the fasting time begins.

For preschoolers (less than 5 years), explain what will be done during the test, and reassure your child that this is a "helping test." Discuss the test the night before or the day of the test. It may make your child more anxious to talk about it too far ahead of time. Tell your child you will be close during the test. Bring along your child's favorite book to read during waiting periods.

For school-aged children, the test may not seem threatening, since they may have already had X-rays or other medical tests before. Explain the test to your child, and answer any questions or concerns he/she might have. Tell your child to ask questions of us

during the test. Bring along a book for your child to read during waiting periods.

For adolescents, privacy may be their biggest concern. Explain the test to your teen, and encourage him/her to ask us questions.

Does my child have to do anything different before the test?

Your child's doctor will tell you if there are special things to do before your child has the test. Please call Radiology at 901-287-7041 if you need further instructions.

If your child is scheduled for an air contrast barium, please call the Le Bonheur Radiology department for before test instructions.

What else should I know about coming for the test?

It is best not to bring siblings or other children with you to have your child's test. There are times when you will need to be with your child, and other children cannot be left unattended or permitted in the procedure room.

Sometimes, depending on the age and cooperativeness of the child, immobilization devices may be used to get the test done as quickly as possible for the child, and to make sure the results are good.

The radiology staff tries to maintain the schedule as closely as possible. Occasionally a patient requires more time than usual to complete a test. We ask for your cooperation and understanding if you are asked to wait for another patient's test to be finished. The staff will take the time needed for your child, as well.

If you are pregnant, bring another adult to be with your child during the test. You will need to be protected from X-ray exposure. Radiation regulations do not allow pregnant females in X-ray rooms.