

St. Joseph Hospital Imaging  
Department of Radiology

### What is a Barium Enema?

A Barium Enema or lower GI is an X-ray of the colon or large intestine. A Barium enema is usually ordered to detect cancer, blockages and other disorders of the colon or large intestine.

### Before your test

- Please inform the person scheduling your appointment if you are diabetic.
- A bowel cleansing prep must be purchased at St Joseph Pharmacy or any other pharmacy by noon the day before the exam. The bowel prep starts at 1pm. Instructions are located on our website under Bowel Prep.
- **Do not to eat or drink anything after midnight.** Continue to take prescribed medications (**with a sip of water**) on the day of the exam, unless instructed otherwise by your doctor.
- There is no bowel prep needed for patients with a **colostomy or ileostomy**. Only clear liquids on the day before exam.
- **If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant please advise the technologist.**
- The technologist will ask you a few questions regarding your medical history. Please notify the technologist of any allergies you may have.

**Please arrive early as instructed by your appointment.  
Please register at the St. Joseph Hospital Outpatient Pavilion on the 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR.**

### During your test

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown. The technologist will gently insert a small tube into the rectum and a tiny balloon will be inflated to prevent the tube from coming out during the test. The technologist will then begin filling your colon with barium while the radiologist begins taking X-rays. You may be asked to turn from side to side to image your colon in different views. You may also be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds at a time. Once the radiologist is through, the technologist will drain the liquid from your colon and the tube will be removed. An additional X-ray is obtained at the end of the test to check how well the bowel emptied.

### After your test

You may resume your normal activities. We recommend you drink lots of water after your test to help clear the barium out of your system for at least two days. The radiologist and/or technologist will not be able to give you any results. The results will be available to the doctor who ordered the scan within one to two business days.

### Thank you

We are honored that you have selected St. Joseph Hospital to serve your healthcare needs.