

## Patient information factsheet

# Having a gastrografin enema examination

This factsheet will give you information about having a gastrografin enema. We hope it will answer some of the questions that you may have but, if there is anything that you do not understand, a member of your healthcare team will be happy to explain further.

### What is a gastrografin enema?

A gastrografin enema is a radiological examination of your colon and rectum (large bowel) by filling it with gastrografin. Gastrografin is a water soluble clear fluid that shows up on x-ray pictures. The examination is usually performed to assess if there is a leak outside the bowel.

The procedure will take place in the radiology department and usually takes approximately 25 minutes.

### Preparation for the procedure

No bowel preparation is needed and you can eat and drink as normal on the day.

If you are female and of childbearing capacity, you will be asked to complete a form with the date of your last period and whether there is any possibility you may be pregnant. This is because this examination should only be performed when we can be sure that you are not pregnant.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you have problems standing or transferring from a wheelchair so that we can make arrangements.

You should also let us know if you have had any previous allergic reactions to iodine or x-ray contrast (a liquid that is visible on x-ray). Our telephone number is over the page.

### What to bring with you

You might wish to bring your own dressing gown, slippers and reading material.

### During the procedure

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown before being taken to the examination room where you will be asked to lie on your left side, at which point, a soft tube is gently inserted into the back passage by a radiologist (a doctor who uses x-rays to diagnose illnesses).

The gastrografin liquid is passed through the tube into the large bowel, during which time x-ray pictures will be taken. You may be asked to move into different positions to coat the bowel.

Once all the x-ray pictures have been taken, the gastrografin will be drained out, the tube is removed and you can go to the toilet that is immediately adjacent to the x-ray room.

Most people do not find the procedure painful but you may experience some discomfort when the tube is inserted.

### After the procedure

You may experience small amounts of clear fluid or mucus from your back passage, which may occasionally be blood-stained. Some people also get mild abdominal cramp.

It is sensible to bring a change of underwear as a precaution.

## Risks

There is some exposure to radiation during the procedure because x-rays are used. However, as this is a low dose examination, exposure to radiation is kept to a minimum. Generally, the amount of radiation you are exposed to during this procedure is equivalent to between a few days and a few years of exposure to natural radiation from the environment.

## Results

The radiologist will examine the pictures and a report of the findings will be sent to the doctor who requested the procedure. This report should be available at your outpatient follow up appointment.

## Further information

Some of your questions should have been answered in this factsheet but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you.

It is important that you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure. If you have any questions before or after the examination please telephone the radiology department on 023 8120 4870 from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

## Useful links

NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.