

## Patient information factsheet

# Having a gastrografin enema examination

We have given you this factsheet because you have been referred for a gastrografin enema examination. It explains what a gastrografin enema is and what will happen at your appointment, so you know what to expect. We hope it will answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

### What is a gastrografin enema?

A gastrografin enema is a type of x-ray test to examine the lower part of your bowel.

The procedure involves passing a contrast medium called gastrografin (a clear fluid that shows up on x-rays) into your bowel through your bottom (back passage). It is usually performed to assess if there is a leak outside of your bowel.

### How should I prepare for the procedure?

No bowel preparation is needed. You can eat and drink as normal on the day and take your usual medications.

### Allergies

Please contact us as soon as possible if you have had any reactions to iodine or x-ray contrast (a liquid visible on x-rays) in the past.

### Pregnancy

If you are pregnant or think there is a chance that you might be pregnant, please contact us before your appointment.

### Additional support

Please let us know as soon as you receive your appointment letter if you have problems standing or transferring from a wheelchair so that we can make sure we have the appropriate equipment and support available.

If you have any personal health concerns which you feel may affect your safety in the department, or if you think you may need assistance, please let us know when you arrive.

### Clothing and jewellery

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown for this procedure.

We will also ask you to remove any jewellery that may interfere with the x-ray images. As a department, we cannot take responsibility if these items are lost or misplaced, so we advise removing all jewellery at home before your appointment.

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## What will happen during the procedure?

The procedure will be performed by a radiologist (a doctor who uses x-rays to diagnose illnesses) in the radiology department.

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown before taking you to the examination room. We will then introduce you to the team who will be performing your procedure and explain what will happen during the procedure. This is a good opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have.

We will then ask you to lie on a table on your left side. We will then gently insert a soft tube into your back passage until it reaches the lower part of your bowel.

Once the tube is in the correct position, we will pass gastrografin through it into your large bowel. We will then take some x-ray images. We may ask you to move into different positions to allow the gastrografin to coat your bowel.

Once we have taken all the x-ray images, we will drain out the gastrografin and remove the tube. After this, you will be able to go to the toilet that is immediately adjacent to the x-ray room.

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

## How long will the procedure take?

The procedure will usually take approximately 25 minutes.

## What will happen 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 (tummy) cramping.

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

## Are there any risks?

### Radiation

During your procedure, we will use x-rays to see inside your body. The procedure cannot be done without x-rays. All x-rays use ionising radiation which increases your risk of cancer, but for this procedure, the risk is very low.

Your doctor has decided that the benefit to you from the procedure outweighs the very low risk from the radiation. We will not expose you to any more radiation than is absolutely necessary.

### Pregnancy

This procedure involves the use of ionising radiation (x-rays) which although considered safe for you, may be harmful to an unborn baby. As such, we have a legal obligation to check if there is any chance that you may be pregnant. We have to ask this question to anyone who has the potential to become pregnant, regardless of age or circumstances.

## When will I receive the results?

We will not be able to give you any results or feedback on the day of your procedure. We will examine the x-ray images and then send a report of our findings to the doctor who referred you for the procedure.

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If you were referred by a doctor at the hospital, this report should be available at your next outpatient appointment.

## Further information

### Transport

If you are arriving by car, please be advised that our car parks can get very busy, so it's a good idea to allow plenty of time to find a space. You may wish to consider getting a lift or coming by public transport.

If you have a medical condition that means you need help getting to and from the hospital, please contact the patient transport service directly on **0300 123 9833**.

### Bringing someone with you

We do not advise bringing children with you to your appointment as they cannot stay with you while you have the procedure and they must not be left unattended at any time.

If you do bring children with you, you will need to arrange for a responsible adult to look after them while you have the procedure. Please note that our staff are not able to supervise your children on your behalf. If this causes any difficulties, please contact us to rearrange your appointment using the details below.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns before or after your procedure, please contact the radiology department using the details below.

Radiology department

Telephone: **023 8120 6079** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

If you are unsure as to why you need this procedure, please speak to the doctor or clinical team who referred you.

## Useful links

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-visitors/southampton-general-hospital/getting-here](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-visitors/southampton-general-hospital/getting-here)

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