

## What to expect with a contrast enema.

### What is a contrast enema?

A contrast enema (also called a barium enema) is a type of x-ray test. This test uses a liquid, called contrast, that makes the large intestine (where poop is stored) show more clearly on x-rays. The contrast liquid gets into the body through a soft tube placed in the hole where poop comes out.

### Why is the contrast enema done?

The contrast enema can help find problems in the large intestine. Your child may have a contrast enema:

- if they have diarrhea (loose, watery poop).
- if they are constipated (hard poop).
- if they have bleeding from their bottom (where poop comes out).
- to check for narrowing or blockage in their intestine.

### How can I prepare my child for the contrast enema?

- Your child can eat, drink, and take medicines on the day of the test. But do not let your child eat a large meal right before the test.
- Tell your child why they need the contrast enema using words they understand.
- Bring their favorite book or toy to distract them during the waiting time, and their favorite stuffed toy to hold during the test.
- Tell your child that you or another caregiver will be with them the whole time. (If you are pregnant, you cannot be with your child when x-rays are being taken.)
- Plan for what you can do to help your child relax (hold hands, take deep breaths, or squeeze a stress ball).
- For girls who have begun to menstruate (have periods), a pregnancy test will be done before the contrast enema starts.

### What happens on the day of your child's contrast enema?

- You and your child will check in at the main reception of the hospital. They will show you how to check in with the radiology unit.
- You and your child will meet the care team:
  - The **radiology technologist** will place the soft tube for the contrast liquid and help your child be in the right position during the pictures.
  - The **Child Life Specialist** is trained in child development to prepare children for tests. This can help lessen worries and help with coping. If needed, the Child Life Specialist can stay with your child during the test to distract them and answer questions using language your child understands.
  - A **radiologist** is a doctor who takes the x-rays and then reads the results.
- Your child will take off their clothes, including underwear, and put on a gown.

- Your child will lie on a long table on their side in the fetal position (with their knees up to their chest). The radiology technologist will put a soft tube in the hole where poop comes out.



- The radiology technologist will put the contrast liquid in the soft tube. This contrast liquid is what is seen on the x-rays and how the doctor can watch the flow of your child's intestines. Your child's tummy may feel full for a little while.
- After the contrast liquid is put in, we will ask your child to lie in other positions. The radiologist will take pictures of the intestines with a large camera that is above the table. The camera will not touch or hurt your child.
- After the contrast enema is done, the contrast liquid will be drained out of the soft tube. Your child will also go to the bathroom to release the rest of the liquid. Their tummy will feel less full after the liquid drains out.
- Then, one more picture will be taken.

## What happens after the test?

- Your child may start eating, drinking, and playing right away.
- The next few poops may be loose or watery.
- Call your child's doctor if they have trouble pooping.
- The doctor will discuss the results with you during a follow-up appointment or phone call.