Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Barium Meal and Follow Through

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Barium Meal and Follow Through

Patient Information

Radiology Department

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Introduction

It is very important that you take the time to read this **entire** leaflet, as it contains important information and instructions essential for your examination to be performed successfully.

What is a barium follow through?

A barium follow through is a special X-Ray study of the small bowel. The bowel does not show up very well on ordinary X-Ray pictures, therefore we will ask you to drink a white chalky liquid called “barium” to highlight the bowel, enabling us to produce clearer pictures.

Am I required to fast?

Yes.

Please do not eat or drink anything from midnight the night before your examination.

Important Information

If any of the following apply to you, please contact the X-Ray Department:

- Have you had a bowel biopsy within one week of your appointment date?

- Are you or might you be pregnant?

If you are aged between 12 – 55 years then you will be asked to complete a pregnancy questionnaire, including the date of your last period.

If you had your last period more than 28 days before the appointment date; please ring the X-ray Department for advice on 01942 822398.

When you arrive at the hospital

Please follow the directions to the Radiology or X-Ray Department and report to the reception desk.

You will be shown to a private cubicle and given a gown to put on. You will be able to place your personal items in a basket that you will keep with you. If you want to bring your own dressing gown to wear over the top, that is fine (not essential).

What happens during the examination?

You will be taken into the X-Ray room and introduced to the Practitioner Radiographer / Consultant Radiologist.

You will be asked to drink some “barium” (white chalky liquid). A series of X-Ray pictures of your abdomen will be taken at timed intervals, with you either lying on your front or back.

You will be asked to sit outside the X-Ray room in between each picture and given another cup full of barium to drink.

Once the barium has reached the end of your small bowel, it will be necessary to take some more pictures whilst pressing on your abdomen in certain areas. This is to ensure that your entire small bowel has all been visualised.

Once the examination is complete, you are free to leave the department.

How long will it take?

This test can take a long time. Everybody's bowel works differently, some slower or quicker than others, so be aware that you may be in the X-Ray department 2-3 hours, sometimes longer. (It may be a good idea to bring a good book or magazine to read).

Are there any risks or side effects?

Your stools may appear whiter in colour and may remain discoloured for the next day or two.

You are advised to eat a good high fibre diet including plenty of fruit and vegetables, and we do ask that you drink plenty of fluids (water, tea or fruit juice) for the next two days to ensure that you do not become constipated from the barium.

After the procedure, you will be given an aftercare information leaflet to take home with you.

Radiation – is it safe?

X-rays are used to produce images in this procedure. X-Rays are a type of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day; this comes from the sun, the food we eat, and the ground. Being exposed to X-Rays carries a small risk, but your Consultant feels that this risk is outweighed by the benefits of having this procedure. We take every precaution to minimise the number of X-Rays you receive.

When will I get the results?

The report will be sent to your Consultant for your next clinic appointment, or if your General Practitioner (GP) referred you for the test, they should have the results in around 14 days.

Frequently asked questions

Can I take my medication?

Yes, with a small amount of water

Can I eat and drink?

No, it is very important that you do not eat or drink anything from midnight the night before your examination.

Information for diabetic patients

We do try to book diabetic patients first thing onto a morning list to reduce the time you need to fast. It is probably a good idea to bring a sandwich and drink with you to have after your examination is complete.

If you begin to feel ill whilst fasting, you can have a few sips of a sugar glucose drink. If you would like further advice, you can ring the X-Ray Department on **01942 822398**.

Where can I park my car?

You can park your car on the main Royal Albert Edward Infirmary (RAEI) hospital site and there is a charge. Charges apply, and payment can be made using cash or card.

We now have another car park available to patients on Freckleton Street, and there is a short walk (0.2 miles) up to the hospital from here.

The following people are eligible to receive free parking at our hospitals:

1. Disabled people holding a valid Blue Badge, to be displayed in windscreen of vehicle.

2. Frequent outpatient attendees, defined as those who are required to attend hospital for an appointment at least three times within a month for at least three months.

3. Parents or guardians of sick children staying overnight in the hospital.

Outpatients and parents / guardians outlined in points two and three need to request an exemption pass from the relevant ward manager or the security office and display this in their vehicle for the duration of their stay.

Ambulance Transport

If it is necessary for you to have ambulance transport and you live in the Wigan Borough, please telephone **0300 0707 0737** to arrange it. Please inform the ambulance depot that it is for a special X-Ray, and it is essential that you arrive on time.

If you do not live in the Wigan Borough, please contact your GP to arrange your ambulance transport.

Further Information

If you have any queries regarding the examination, or suggestions on how we may improve any aspect of our service, please do not hesitate to speak to us either on the day of the examination or contact us on 01942 822398 (Monday to Friday 9am until 5pm).



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