

Contrast Enema

What is a Contrast Enema?

A contrast enema uses fluoroscopy (like an X-ray movie) and a water soluble contrast agent to show the structure of the rectum and large intestine (colon). At Texas Children's Hospital, we use state-of-the-art equipment that is specifically designed for imaging pediatric patients safely using the lowest amount of radiation exposure necessary for the exam.

Why is this exam performed?

A contrast enema allows the Radiologist to gather detailed information that they cannot learn from a physical examination. The exam gives an accurate diagnosis about your child's large intestine.

Common indications include:

- Constipation
- Abdominal pain
- Chronic diarrhea
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Rectal bleeding
- Hirschprung's disease

What to expect

Since your child will be awake for the exam, one parent or guardian (or two adults if the child has a disability) may be with the child in the exam room. It may be helpful to make arrangements for other siblings. For safety reasons, you will be asked to step out of the exam room if there is a chance you could be pregnant.

Preparing your child is key to the success of this study. To help prepare your child, our Child Life Specialists will help ease your child's fear and anxiety. Please let a staff member know if you are

interested in a Child Life consultation at no additional cost.

Your child and the accompanying adult(s) will be taken to the procedure room by a technologist and be asked to change into a gown. The child will need to remove underwear and socks as well. The room has an x-ray machine, a long table, and a television monitor. If you have any questions, the Radiologist or X-ray Technologist will answer them before the test begins.

For this 30-45 minute exam:

- Your child will lay down on the fluoroscopy table.
- A small tube will be inserted into your child's rectum, which might cause some discomfort. Taking long, deep breaths will help. This tube will be connected to a bag that contains the water soluble contrast.
- As the contrast fills the large intestine, your child will feel pressure or fullness as if he or she has to have a bowel movement. Your child may feel nauseous and/or vomit during the procedure. This is normal and generally lasts for only a short time.
- The Radiologist/Radiology Physician Extender will move the X-ray camera and ask your child to roll from side to side, or on the stomach to see different parts of the colon. Gentle pressure may be applied to your child's abdomen with a soft paddle to move the contrast. The camera will not touch your child.
- The contrast will be drained from the colon at the conclusion of the study and/or your child will be encouraged to the restroom.
- A repeat abdominal x-ray may be taken after evacuation, if needed.
- You will be provided discharge instructions at the conclusion of your appointment.

Receiving your Contrast Enema results

Call your doctor for a follow up appointment as instructed. You can also call the doctor who ordered the study for the results 24 to 48 hours after the test. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call Radiology Nursing at 832-826-5371.

If you would like a CD of your child's study, please call the film library at 832-822-1202. The Radiologist's report will also be included on the CD.