Air Contrast Barium Enema

Your doctor has scheduled you for an x-ray examination called an air contract barium enema. This is an examination of your large intestine (colon) that involves an enema with a barium and air mixture. There are a few things you should know about before you check in to the imaging department.

**PREPARATION:** Prepare for your test as instructed. Bowel Preparation kits come with easy to follow instructions, and not following these instructions may result in the cancellation of your exam. This preparation cleans your bowels out, and this is important because leftover bowel contents can affect the detail on the x-ray. The majority of patients are well cleaned out by the preparation, but some patients may not have as good results. If this happens to you, you may be asked if you are willing to re-prep with a slightly modified preparation kit, as the exam would otherwise give limited information.

**BEFORE THE TEST:** For your safety, you will be asked a number of questions by the technologist and radiologist. Among the things you will be asked are:

- What kind of symptoms are you having?
- Any previous abdominal surgeries?
- Whether or not you are (or may be) pregnant?
- How you prepared for the test?

**THE TEST:** You will be asked to remove most of your clothes, and given hospital gowns to wear during the test. A lubricated tube, with a small balloon on it, will be placed into your rectum to administer the enema. You will feel full, and may feel as if you need to go to the bathroom. If these sensations become painful, please let the radiologist and technologist know. Several x-rays will be taken with you in several different positions on the x-ray table. You will be asked to hold your breath several times, but only for a few seconds at a time. The test will take roughly 30 minutes, but you should be prepared to spend between 60 and 90 minutes in the imaging department. When your test is complete, you will be taken to the bathroom and given all the time you need to expel as much barium as you can.

**AFTER YOUR TEST:** Your activities for the rest of the day are up to you. You may resume your normal diet and daily routines. You will need to drink plenty of fluids over the next 2 days to help remove the barium from your system. Your stools will have a white color to them, because this is the color of the barium.

**RESULTS:** The radiologist will study your x-rays in great detail after you have left the hospital, and will dictate a report which will be transcribed and sent to your doctor within one to two working days unless other arrangements have been made.

Every effort will be made to make you as comfortable as possible during your examination. If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to the imaging staff at 364-2604.