

## What is a contrast enema? Why has my doctor requested this test?

A contrast enema is a test that uses contrast (x-ray dye) to outline the bowel.

This test will show any obvious abnormality of the colon, rectum and anus.

This is particularly useful following surgery for certain diseases of the large bowel such as ulcerative colitis, cancer or diverticulitis. A contrast enema is used to check that the anastomosis (join) is not narrowed or leaking prior to planned reversal of the temporary stoma.

## Who is in the room during this test?

- A doctor; a radiologist or radiology registrar (a fully qualified doctor who is specialising to become a radiologist)
- Medical Radiation Technologist/s (MRT)
- There may also be a student MRT assisting the MRT during the procedure.

You are welcome to bring a support person along to your appointment, however as this procedure involves the use of X-rays we recommend that they wait in the waiting/ changing room during the procedure.

## How do I prepare for a contrast enema?

Most contrast enemas do not require any preparation.

Very rarely, for some types of contrast enema, specific preparation is required. You will be given separate instructions if you need to follow any special preparation.

## What happens before the test?

The friendly radiology staff will take you from the waiting room into the changing room and ask you to change into a hospital gown.

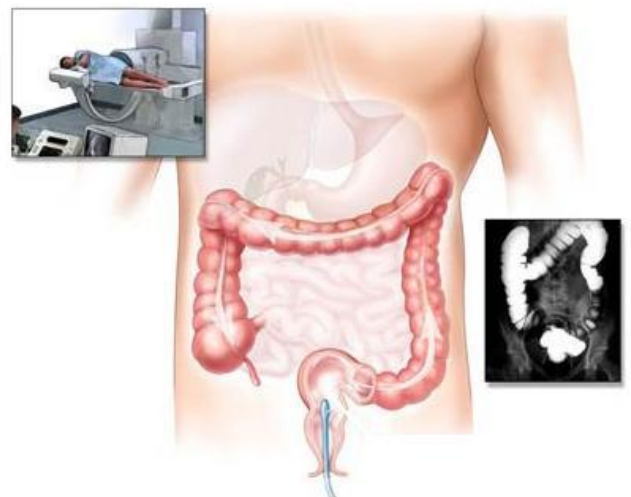
Your belongings can be left safely in the changing room.

The MRT will show you the x-ray table and introduce you to the radiologist who will explain the test and answer any questions that you may have.

## What happens during this test?

You will be asked to lie on your left side on the x-ray table.

The doctor will introduce a small tube into your rectum (back passage). This may be taped into place with some soft tape. The tube is soft and very flexible and will move with you as you lie in different positions.



**Figure 1: Contrast enema demonstrating a Foley catheter in the rectum and (insert) x-ray dye in the bowel**

The doctor will then slowly introduce the contrast. This will feel a little strange and you may feel like you need to pass a motion, please clench your buttocks and resist this urge. You will need to lie in different positions to allow the doctor to look at the bowel from different angles.

Once the doctor has the information that they need, they will then take the tube away and the MRT will assist you to the toilet in the changing room.

Any contrast that is left in your bowel will pass normally in the toilet or via your stoma bag.

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## How long does it take?

Usually the whole procedure will take around 30 minutes.



**Figure 2: The Fluoroscopy room at Wellington Hospital**

## What happens after the contrast enema?

You will be shown to the changing room. You may feel that there is still some contrast in your bowel, you can take your time and use the toilet as long as you need. There is also a shower in the changing room that you are welcome to use if you require it. As the contrast is liquid, it may travel into your stoma bag; this can be emptied as normal. Contrast is not radioactive.

## What are the risks of this test?

A contrast enema is generally considered to be a safe test

- Any new drug carries a small risk that you may be allergic to one of the ingredients. The risk is considered very low for this procedure. If you have any allergies, please inform the radiology staff on the day of your procedure.
- All x-ray examinations involve exposure to radiation in varying amounts. The length and level of exposure to radiation from x-rays in medical procedures is strictly controlled and kept to the minimum possible.

## How do I find out the results of this test?

The doctor will not be able to provide a result immediately.

They will study the images obtained and will write a formal report and send the results to the doctor that referred you for this test. A copy will also be sent to your GP.

Results are usually available to your doctor within 2 weeks.

## Where can I go to find more information?

If you have any further questions about this test contact the radiology admin team using the contact details below and they will arrange for an MRT to call you back.

If you have questions about why you are having this test, please discuss with your doctor.

There are no lockable facilities in Radiology. We strongly recommend that any valuables are left at home.

Please be aware that CCDHB does not take responsibility for any loss or damage of personal property belonging to patients whilst on CCDHB premises

### What is Contrast?

Contrast (sometimes called x-ray dye) is the name given to a liquid that shows up on x-rays. This is not radioactive. There are 2 types of contrast used commonly for Fluoroscopy studies. The doctor performing the test will decide which contrast is best for each study.

**Barium** is a white chalky liquid that sticks to surfaces very well. If barium is used, the Fluoroscopy staff will advise you to drink more fluid after the test, this will help prevent you from becoming constipated. Barium may leave a residue in the toilet bowl and require an extra flush.

**Non Ionic contrast** is a clear liquid that is water soluble. Sometimes if it dries on the skin it can leave a white, slightly sticky residue, much like sugar syrup. This will wash away easily with warm water.

### Contact us

**Phone:** (04) 806 2193 ask for Fluoroscopy bookings

**Hours:** 8am-4pm, Monday to Friday

**Email:** radiology.admin@ccdhb.org.nz