

Air Contrast Lower GI

An Air Contrast Lower GI uses contrast materials, barium and air, to show the large intestine, or colon, which is part of the Gastrointestinal (GI) Tract. A radiologist, a doctor specially trained in performing and reading GI exams, will perform this test. An Air Contrast Lower GI test will last about 1 hour and is done in the Radiology (X-ray) department.

Please tell your doctor or the X-ray staff if you might be pregnant or if you have had a problem with this exam in the past.

Preparation for the Test

You will need to purchase two bottles of Magnesium Citrate[®] at least one day before your exam. You can purchase these two bottles at the hospital pharmacy and most local drug stores.

Day Before Your Test

- Take only clear liquids on the day before your test (water, apple juice, bouillon, soup, tea or coffee without milk or sugar). Make sure you drink plenty of fluids.
- 11 am: Drink the first bottle of Magnesium Citrate[®].
- 4 pm: Drink the second bottle of Magnesium Citrate[®].
- Nothing to eat or drink after midnight.

Day of the Test

Do not take anything by mouth the morning of the exam.

Prior to the Test

Patients will need to wear a gown for this exam. Gowns will be provided. Outpatients will be shown to a dressing area for changing into the gown. All underwear must be removed at this time. Please remove any loose or hanging jewelry, such as necklaces. It is not usually necessary to remove rings or watches, but you may wish to do so for comfort and security.

Please tell your doctor or the X-ray staff if you:

- Might be pregnant.
- Have had a problem with this exam in the past.

During the Lower GI Test

Before the test begins the technologist (tech) and radiologist will explain the test and the equipment used.

The staff will instruct you to lie on the X-ray table on your left side. The tech will gently insert the enema tip into your rectum using lubricating gel for comfort.

The enema bag will be adjusted so that the barium flows easily into your colon. Once the colon is filled with barium, it is then allowed to flow back into the bag. When this step is over, the radiologist will put air into the colon.

You will then lie in different positions (such as on your back, side, etc.) as X-rays are taken. The test is over once the X-rays are completed. At this time, you may use the bathroom.

After the Test

You may resume your normal activities and diet after the test. It is suggested that you drink an additional 1 or 2 glasses of water.

You will note a temporary change in the color and frequency of your bowel movements. If any changes last more than 2 to 3 days please contact your doctor.

If you have any questions or concerns about this test, please ask your doctor, nurse, or radiology staff.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nmh.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at www.nmh.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar a el departamento de representantes para pacientes al 312-926-3112.

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Developed by: Department of Radiology

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For more information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit www.nmh.org.

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