



**Queensland  
Government**

**PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET ONLY**

**NO DOCUMENTED CONSENT REQUIRED**

*Unless patient is renal impaired*

**1. What is a Contrast Enema?**

A Contrast Enema is an x-ray procedure that examines the large bowel (colon) using Contrast (once called x-ray dye) such as Barium and Gastrografin®.

**2. Will there be any discomfort, is any anaesthetic needed?**

You may feel discomfort when the tube is inserted into your back passage and the balloon is inflated. You may have a feeling of fullness and mild abdominal cramping during this procedure, this is normal.

Sometimes a muscle relaxing drug may be given to ease the discomfort of cramping.

No anaesthetic is required for this procedure.

**3. Preparation for the procedure**

The medical imaging department will give you instructions on how to prepare for your procedure.

- A bowel preparation kit. The bowel must be completely clear for the procedure to be accurate and complete.
- Please tell staff if you are or suspect you might be pregnant.

**4. During the procedure**

A small lubricated tube is gently inserted a short way into your back passage. A tiny balloon on the end of the tube is inflated to help hold it in place and help prevent Contrast from leaking out.

Contrast is slowly inserted into your bowel through the tube. Sometimes air is also added to the bowel through the tube. X-ray pictures are taken.

The contrast will be drained from your bowel through the tube (as much as possible).

The tube will be removed from your back passage.

**5. After the procedure**

Following the procedure you will be able to visit the toilet. Your stool may appear white for a few days, this is normal.

It is important to drink plenty of water for a few days after the procedure to avoid constipation and dehydration.

**6. What are the risks of this specific procedure?**

The risks and complications with this procedure can include but are not limited to the following.

**Common risks and complications include:**

- Constipation, drinking extra fluids and laxatives can help with this.
- Diarrhoea, causing dehydration, drinking extra fluids can help with this.

**Less common risks and complications include:**

- The procedure may not be possible due to medical and/or technical reasons.

**Rare risks and complications include:**

- An increased lifetime cancer risk due to the exposure to x-rays
- Perforation of the bowel. This may require antibiotics and surgery.
- Bleeding from the bowel. This may require other procedures and/or corrective surgery.
- Bacteraemia (infection in the blood). This will need antibiotics.
- Allergic reaction to the Contrast. This could result in a rash, hives, itching, nausea, fainting or shortness of breath. Medication may be given to relieve this.
- Death as a result of this procedure is very rare.

**7. What are the safety issues when you leave the hospital?**

Go to your nearest Emergency Department or GP if you become unwell or have;

- a problem with a bowel movement or passing urine
- abdomen tenderness and/or hardness
- severe ongoing abdomen pain
- bleeding from the back passage (more than ½ cup of blood)
- a fever.

**Notes to talk to my doctor/ health practitioner about:**

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