



## ➤ LOWER GI SERIES

### What is a Lower GI Series?

A lower gastrointestinal (GI) series (Barium Enema) uses x-rays to diagnose problems in the large intestine, which includes the colon and rectum. The lower GI series may show problems such as inflammatory conditions, ulcers, polyps, diverticuli and colon cancer.

Before taking x-rays of your colon and rectum, the physician will put a thick liquid called barium into your colon. This is why a lower GI series is sometimes called a barium enema. The barium coats the lining of the colon and rectum and makes these organs, and any signs of disease in them, show up more clearly on x-rays.

### What Preparation is Required for the Procedure?

Your colon must be empty for the procedure to be accurate. To prepare for the procedure you will have to restrict your diet for a day beforehand. For example, you may need to have only clear liquids the day before; and nothing after midnight the night before. To make sure your colon is empty, you will be given a laxative or an enema before the procedure. Your physician may give you other special instructions or diet restrictions. Please follow your physician's instructions very carefully.

### What Can I Expect During a Lower GI Series?

You may be uncomfortable during the lower GI series. The barium will cause fullness and pressure in your abdomen and will make you feel the urge to have a bowel movement. However, that rarely happens because the tube used to inject the barium has a balloon on the end of it that prevents the liquid from coming back out.

You may be asked to change positions while x-rays are taken. Different positions give different views of the colon. After the doctor is finished taking x-rays, you will be able to go to the bathroom. The physician may also take an x-ray of the empty colon afterwards.

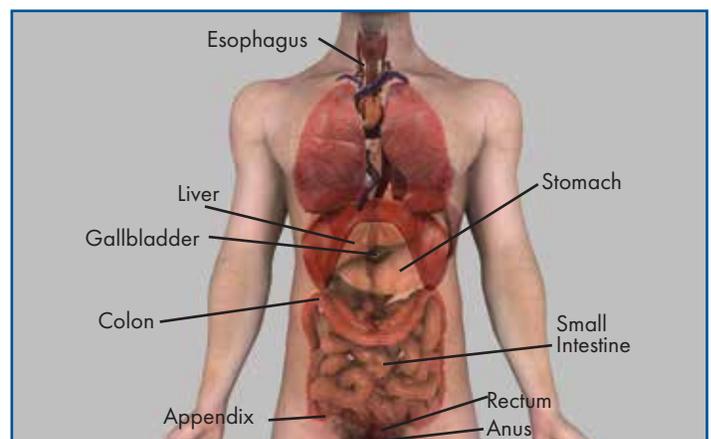
A lower GI series takes about 1 hour to complete. The barium may cause constipation and make your stool turn gray or white for a few days after the procedure.

### What Happens After a Lower GI Series?

After the procedure, the doctor will analyze the x-rays and determine the next steps for diagnosis or treatment of your condition. You should not experience any major side effects after a Lower GI Series and you will be able to safely return home and to work.

Complications from a Lower GI Series are very rare. The main side effect seen after a Lower GI Series is constipation and discoloration of your stool for a few days. If you experience any other side effects or issues, please contact your physician immediately.

**Important Information:** The information included on this sheet is intended only to provide general guidance and not as a definitive basis for diagnosis or treatment in any instance. It is extremely important that you consult a physician about your specific condition.



\*Content derived from the National Digestive Disease Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC) & the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy.

Provided as a courtesy by  
**GI PATHOLOGY**  
One Purpose. One Passion.

A DIVISION OF  
**POPLAR**  
HEALTHCARE