**Barium Enema with Air Contrast (BE with air)**

***Planning ahead:***

* A barium enema requires a colon that is completely clean. Your physician will give you bowel prep instructions. Be sure to follow them exactly and completely, and to contact your physician if you have any trouble with the prep.
* The bowel prep is normally done one day before the exam. If the preparation is not adequate, the exam will have to be canceled.
* If you have had a colonoscopy within four weeks before the barium enema, it is **very important** that you tell the radiologist whether or not a biopsy of the colon was performed during the colonoscopy.
* **Do not eat, drink, or smoke anything at all (no exceptions) for eight hours before the exam.** You may take any regular medications with a sip of water.
* **Arrive at the hospital 30 minutes before your exam is scheduled.** Ask the scheduler what time that is.

***Bring with you to the hospital:***

* Complete list of medications you are currently taking – name and dosage of each medication, and when you take it.
* Written physician’s order for the exam.

***On the day of your test:***

* Come in through the main entrance of Mon General Hospital and go to the Radiology Services registration desk, down the hallway to the right.
* Plan to be at the hospital for approximately two hours.

***Before the exam:***

* Following registration, the technologist will take you to a dressing area, where you will remove all clothing from the waist down and put on a hospital gown. Female patients are encouraged not to wear an underwire bra or any clothing with buttons, or it will be necessary to remove them as well.

**During the exam:**

* The technologist will take a “scout” image, either in the upright position or flat on your back.
* Then the technologist will insert an enema tip into your rectum and administer the rectal contrast. Images will be taken with you rolling into different positions, as instructed.
* Air will also be administered into your rectum, causing minor cramping. To relieve cramping, take slow, deep breaths.
* Once the necessary images have been obtained, the enema tip will be removed, and you will be taken to the bathroom adjoining the X-ray room. After evacuating all barium and air, it may be necessary to obtain additional X-rays, if needed.

***After the exam:***

* It is not uncommon for you to feel the need to evacuate more barium after you leave the department, even after you think that you are “empty”. If you have a long trip ahead of you, you may want to plan frequent bathroom stops and pack spare clothes, just in case you need them.
* You may become constipated from the barium. Drink plenty of fluids to try to avoid this. If constipation persists, even after increasing fluids, contact your doctor who ordered the test.

For more information, call the Mon General Department of Radiology Services at (304) 598-1280.