

# Having an X-ray test with a contrast drink to look at your stomach and small bowel

## Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

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## Introduction

If you are an outpatient please read your appointment letter carefully to check which hospital your appointment is at. This leaflet tells you about your X-ray test. Please read it carefully as it has important information and instructions.

## What is this X-ray test for?

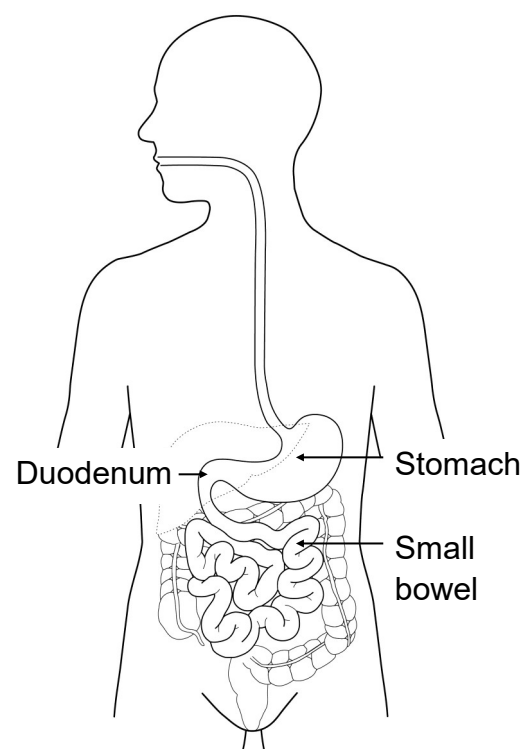
This test is done to look at:

- the lining of the stomach
- the short tube connecting the stomach to the small bowel (duodenum)
- The middle part of the intestines called the small bowel

These parts of the body do not show up very well on ordinary X-ray pictures. We ask you to drink a liquid (contrast) which shows up on X-ray pictures.

We take pictures as the contrast passes through your stomach and duodenum. We then take more pictures when the contrast goes further through the small bowel. We call this a follow-through test. This can take up to a few hours because we have to allow time for the contrast liquid to reach the small bowel before taking X-ray pictures.

Your doctor will have decided that this is the best test to look for what may be causing your symptoms.



**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## Important information

- **If there is any chance that you may be pregnant**, please call the Radiology Department as soon as possible. The phone number is at the end of this leaflet.
- **If you need an interpreter, or if you have any special requirements**, please contact the radiology department for more information.
- **Medicines** should be taken as usual unless you have been told not to by the doctor.

## Information for patients with diabetes

If you have diabetes you should have been given a morning appointment. If you have not, please contact the radiology department. We may not know that you have diabetes.

**Do not take your morning insulin or diabetes tablets before the X-ray test.**

Please bring the following with you to your X-ray test:

- some food
- your own insulin
- any instructions you have for giving your insulin.

You can take all other medicine as usual.

**You will need to change your insulin dose. Please contact your normal diabetes care provider for advice.**

**Tell them about the instructions in this leaflet as soon as you get this appointment letter.**

## How do I get ready for my X-ray test?

Please follow the instructions below. This helps to reduce the amount of poo in your bowel.

### The day before your X-ray test

- Only eat food from the low fibre (low residue) diet sheet on page 3.
- You should drink plenty of clear fluids (water, black tea or coffee, soft drinks, strained fruit juice).

### 6 hours before your X-ray test:

- Do not eat anything for 6 hours before your appointment time.
- **Keep drinking plenty of clear fluids.**

## Low fibre (residue) diet

The day before the test only have small meals made up of foods low in fibre in the list below.

You should drink plenty of clear fluids.

**Please do not eat any fruit, vegetables, nuts, pulses, beans or lentils.**

<b>Bread and crackers</b>	White plain varieties of bread, pitta bread, chapatti, naan bread, poppadoms or crumpets (no more than 4 pieces of these a day)
<b>Rice, pasta, noodles</b>	White varieties of boiled rice, pasta, egg noodles, rice noodles or couscous (no more than 4 tablespoons a day)
<b>Potatoes or yam</b>	Boiled or mashed potatoes or yam (no skin) (no more than the size of 4 large eggs a day)
<b>Meat, fish, eggs and protein substitutes</b>	Lean or tender meat (such as beef, lamb or pork) and poultry (chicken or turkey) Fresh, frozen or tinned fish in brine. Eggs: boiled, poached or scrambled Tofu
<b>Dairy food and dairy substitutes</b>	Cheese, cream cheese, milk (1/2 pint per day including for cereal and drinks), lassi, kefir. Rice pudding, yoghurt (with no fruit pieces in), custard, ice-cream Soy milk, rice milk or almond milk.
<b>Biscuits, crackers and cakes</b>	Plain biscuits such as Rich Tea, arrowroot, malted milk, cream crackers. Cake make with white flour, such as angel cake, madeira cake or chocolate cake.
<b>Cereal</b>	Cornflakes or crisped rice cereal.
<b>Drinks</b>	Water, fizzy drinks, fruit cordial/squash, milk, milkshakes (no fruit pieces) Hot chocolate, tea, coffee, Bovril, Oxo, Marmite
<b>Snacks</b>	Jelly, mousse, plain or milk chocolate, boiled sweets, mints, jelly babies, Wotsits, Quavers,
<b>Fats</b>	Butter, margarine, ghee, low fat spread.
<b>Sugar</b>	Sugar, honey, syrup, sweetener, gur, jaggery, jelly type smooth jam (no seeds, rind or fruit pieces)
<b>Other</b>	Tomato ketchup, mayonnaise, salt, vinegar, soy sauce.

## What happens during the test?

**Most patients having this X-ray test will follow this routine below. Sometimes the test may change a little for patients with specific health problems. This may be decided on the day. We will tell you about your test in the X-ray room.**

- When you get to the radiology department we will send you to the waiting area.
- We may take you to a changing cubicle so you can take off some of your clothes and put on a hospital gown.
- Before the X-ray test we may give you a small drink that can help the contrast drink go through your intestines faster.
- We take you into the X-ray room and talk to you about your test. You may ask any questions that you have.
- We may give you a small injection of a medicine called Buscopan into a vein in your arm during your test. This helps to relax the muscles of the bowel. It slows down the emptying of your stomach. This helps us to get clearer pictures. If this is needed we will talk to you about it at the time.
- We may ask you to swallow a 'fizzy' powder and a lemon flavoured drink during your test. The powder and drink mix together to release air into the stomach. We will tell you if you are having this drink. Keep the air in your stomach. Do not let the air from your stomach come out.
- We ask you to drink up to 2 cups of contrast liquid. This may be a white, chalky fluid called barium. Or, it will be a colourless drink called Gastromiro. The contrast liquid shows up on X-rays.
- We ask you to lie down on or stand against the X-ray table. It is different for each patient.
- We take some X-ray pictures of your stomach and small bowel. We ask you to lie or stand in different positions for the X-rays.
- We then may ask you to sit in the waiting area. This gives the contrast liquid some time to go through your small bowel. We may take X-ray pictures of your tummy (abdomen) at intervals (around every 30 to 60 minutes). This is until the contrast gets to the right part of your bowel. We may do these X-rays in another X-ray room.

If you have any questions or worries please speak to a member of staff.

## Who will be doing the test?

- A doctor who specialises in imaging and X-ray treatments (an interventional radiologist) or a specially trained radiographer will do the test.
- Someone trained to take X-ray pictures (a radiographer or assistant practitioner) will move and control the special X-ray equipment.
- A radiology assistant may be there to help the other staff and care for you.
- A student may also be in the room. If you do not want this, you can ask that a student is not in the room when you have your test.

## How long will it take?

The first part of the test takes between 10 and 20 minutes.

The follow-through part of the test can take a few hours. This happens if we need to wait until the contrast has gone further along your intestines. We will ask you to sit in the waiting area until it is time to take an X-ray. We may do the X-rays in a different X-ray room.

Please allow a full morning or afternoon for your X-ray test. The time will vary for each patient.

## What happens after the test?

After the X-ray test you can go home and eat and drink as usual. You do not need to restrict your diet in any way after the test.

### What to look out for:

- **Eye symptoms:** if you had an injection of Buscopan during the test, the muscles of your eyes may have relaxed as well as the muscles of your bowel. This may cause blurred vision in some patients. Blurred vision usually lasts for about 30 minutes. **Do not drive until your eyesight returns to normal.**

**If you get any pain in your eyes in the next 24 hours (this is rare), please go to your nearest Eye Casualty or Emergency Department (A&E) straight away. Tell the doctor you have had an injection of Buscopan. Show them this leaflet or the aftercare sheet you will be given at the end of the test.**

- **Dry mouth:** the Buscopan can give you a dry mouth. This will not last long.

### If you had the barium drink:

- Your poo may look white or lighter in colour for a few days.
- You may have loose poo for 1 or 2 days after the test. This is perfectly normal.
- Barium can cause constipation. Drinking plenty of fluids and eating foods high in fibre until the barium leaves your body can help prevent you becoming constipated.

### If you had the colourless drink:

- You may have mild diarrhoea for 1 or 2 days. Your poo may be more runny and you may need to rush to the toilet to poo.

## How do I get the results?

You will not get the results straight away.

After your test we will tell you who the results will go to and how to get your results.

The radiologist or specialist radiographer will look at your X-ray pictures again.

We will send the results to the GP or hospital doctor who wanted you to have this test.

## What are the risks from exposure to radiation in this X-ray test?

The main risk from exposure to X-rays is a higher risk of getting a cancer in the future. This risk is thought to be very small.

We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, the food we eat, and the ground. Each test that uses X-rays gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation.

The risks of radiation are slightly higher for an unborn child. We must ask all patients age 10 to 15 years registered female and all patients aged 16 to 55 years about their periods and / or possibility of being pregnant.

The radiation from the X-rays during this test is equivalent to receiving about 1.5 to 3.5 years of natural background radiation

The benefits of having this test are likely to outweigh any possible risks. The risks of not having the test could be greater. We try to keep your exposure to X-rays as low as possible.

## What if I need to talk to someone?



### If you have any questions or concerns, or cannot make the appointment:

Please call the Radiology department on **0116 258 8765** and select **option 7**. Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, but not on bank holidays.

If you have any questions, write them down here to remind you what to ask:

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

Previous reference:

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)