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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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NHS Foundation Trust  
**Water soluble enema  
examination** (page 1 of 2)

## What is a water soluble enema examination?

It is an examination of your large bowel using a clear liquid which shows up on an X-ray picture.

## Are there any side effects or risks?

You may notice an increase in the amount of material passed from the back passage after this test.

Occasionally the water soluble contrast substance (iodine or X-ray dyes) may cause some diarrhoea.

Please drink fluids freely and eat normally after the test.

There is a tiny risk of making a small hole in the bowel, known as a perforation. This happens very, very rarely and generally only if there is a problem such as a severe inflammation of the bowel wall.

The radiation dose is about the same as the average person receives from background radiation over 8-10 months. Special precautions are taken to keep the radiation dose to a minimum.

## What if I am pregnant?

This examination should not be carried out on pregnant women, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please advise the department if you think you are or might be pregnant.

## Is there any special preparation?

There is no specific preparation for this examination.

## What do I do when I arrive in the department?

Please report to the receptionist in the X-ray department first, then take a seat in the main reception waiting area. From here you will be collected by a member of the team, who will check your details. You will be shown to a cubicle where you will be asked to undress and put on a hospital gown. The gown should be done up with the ties at the back.

Please bring your own dressing gown with you to wear while you are waiting.

You should place your clothes and personal items in one of the bags provided, which you keep with you.

You will be called into the X-ray room for the examination as soon as possible.

**Clinical Radiology**  
**01722 336262 ext 4196**

## **Who will I see?**

In the X-ray room will be a radiologist (an X-ray doctor) who will be directing the examination, a radiographer and usually a radiographer assistant as well.

## **What happens during the water soluble enema examination?**

The examination will normally take 15 minutes.

A consultant radiologist/registrar will ask you to lie down on the X-ray table and they will insert a small soft tube into your back passage. Dye will be passed into the tube to outline your bowel on the X-rays. You may be asked to lie in different positions whilst the images are taken so we can visualise the bowel.

## **What happens after the examination?**

On completion of the examination, the tube will be removed and you will be directed to the toilet. When you have finished you may dress and go home. We will provide pads to help with any small leakage from the back passage.

## **Can I eat and drink afterwards?**

Yes. Please eat and drink normally

## **Can I drive home?**

Yes.

## **How will I get the results?**

After the procedure the images will be examined by the radiologist and a report on the examination will be written and sent to the consultant who referred you. Your consultant will arrange a follow-up appointment.