

## **SMALL BOWEL SERIES**

Your doctor has scheduled you for an x-ray examination called a small bowel series. A small bowel series includes all portions of your small bowel and the valve that connects your small intestine to your colon. This exam involves drinking at least two glasses of barium and taking a series of timed pictures.

**PREPARATION:** To prepare for the exam, do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your exam. Also, do not chew gum or smoke during this time. You may brush your teeth, but avoid swallowing the water.

**BEFORE THE TEST:** You will be taken to a dressing room where you will be asked to remove most of your clothing and given a hospital gown to wear during your exam. You will be asked a number of questions by the technologist and radiologist. Among the questions you will be asked are:

- What kind of symptoms are you having?
- Have you had any previous abdominal surgeries?
- For female patients – whether you are or may be pregnant?

**THE TEST:** One picture may or may not be taken before you start drinking barium. You will be given two glasses of barium to drink to start with (you may be asked to drink more barium later on during the exam). X-rays of your abdomen will then be taken at timed intervals. These times will be determined by how fast the barium is moving through your small bowel. The number of pictures taken during the exam varies with each patient. Once the barium has reached the end of your small bowel, a valve called the ileocecal valve, you may be brought back into the x-ray room. At this point, the radiologist will take spot pictures of that valve. He may press on your abdomen while taking these pictures. This exam can take anywhere from 45 minutes to several hours to complete. The time frame depends upon how fast the barium moves through your small bowel.

**AFTER THE TEST:** After the exam, you are free to resume your normal activities and diet unless told otherwise by your doctor. You will need to drink extra fluids over the next 2 days to help remove the barium from your system. You may see white in your stool for the next day or two. There is a slight chance you may become constipated, but the extra fluids should prevent this.

**RESULTS:** The radiologist will study your x-rays in great detail after you have left the hospital, and will dictate a report which will be transcribed and sent to your doctor within one to two working days unless other arrangements have been made.

Every effort will be made to make you as comfortable as possible during your examination. If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to the Imaging staff at 364-2604.