

Patient information

Small Bowel Examination - Appointment Details

Imaging Department

Before Your Examination

It is very important that your stomach and small bowel are completely empty. Please follow these instructions carefully on the day before the examination:

- Have a normal breakfast and lunch.
- From 1.00pm have nothing more to eat until after the examination.
- Drink plenty of fluids until 11.00pm.
- After 11.00pm have nothing to eat or drink.

If you have diabetes and take tablets or insulin please contact the X-ray department as soon as you receive this appointment.

Your hospital doctor or family doctor (GP) has advised that you need a Small Bowel Examination. You may wish to discuss alternative treatments or procedures. Please ask a doctor or nurse if alternative treatments or procedures are available.

What is a small bowel examination?

A small bowel examination uses X-rays and a white liquid called barium to examine the small bowel. It is carried out by a Radiologist (a doctor who specialises in X-rays) or Specialist Radiographer.

What are the benefits of having a small bowel examination?

This procedure will help us make the correct diagnosis so we will be able to give you the correct treatment.

The risks of having a small bowel examination include:

We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. Each X-ray examination gives us a small additional dose. This dose varies with each type of examination. Everything is done within the X-ray department to minimise this dose.

Patients of Child-bearing Age: X-rays may be harmful to an unborn child, especially in the early stages of pregnancy. If you are pregnant or there is any possibility of you being pregnant, please contact the X-ray department before your appointment.

If you are worried about any of these risks, please speak to your doctor or a member of their team.

The examination

There are different ways of giving you the barium:

- By passing a small tube down the nose and into the oesophagus (food pipe) and directly into the stomach and small bowel. The white barium liquid goes through this tube and into your small bowel. The radiologist or specialist radiographer will take X-ray pictures and watch the barium as it goes through the small bowel using a special TV monitor. This examination takes about 30 –40 minutes.
- By drinking the barium and waiting for the barium to pass into the small bowel. A simple abdominal X-ray is taken at timed intervals until the barium reaches the end of the small bowel and the start of the large bowel. At this point the radiologist or specialist radiographer will take further X-rays using a special TV monitor.

This examination can take anything up to five hours depending on how quickly it takes for the barium to reach the end of the small bowel. Everybody is different - some patients may be quicker than others. The radiologist or specialist radiographer will decide which is the best way for you.

After the examination

- When the examination is complete you will be able to eat and drink normally and you can start to take any of your usual medication.
- The barium can cause constipation for a day or so afterwards. This can be avoided by drinking plenty of fluids. You may notice that your motions are paler than usual – this is due to the barium.
- If you are allowed unlimited drinks, an extra pint of fluid per day over the next couple of days will help pass the barium.

Results

The results of your X-ray examination will be sent to the doctor who requested the examination.

Cancellations

If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know as soon as possible and we will arrange another for you. If you fail to cancel and do not attend you will not be sent another appointment.

Transport

If your medical condition or mobility needs mean that you cannot get to your appointment any other way and you require transport you should ring the Patient Transport Services (PTS) who will arrange one for you.

Tel: 0151 706 4676

Car parking

Car parking for visitors and patients is available at the Q-Park multi-storey car park located on Prescott Street, L6 1LY.

For those with walking difficulties, there is a shuttle bus service operating between Q-Park and The Royal Liverpool University Hospital. The bus operates Monday to Friday, 6am-8pm. If you find you are waiting a while for the bus, the driver's number is displayed on the Q-Park exit.

Parking for Blue Badge holders is free at the Mount Vernon Street entrance. However, parking is limited, and you are advised to allow sufficient time for parking as you may need to redirect to the nearby Q-Park.

Please bring this leaflet with you when you attend the X-ray department.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

If you have any further questions, or require further information, please contact the Radiology Appointments Office:

Tel: 0151 706 2759

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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زانیاری پیوندیدار به نه‌خوشانه‌ی له‌لایمن تراسته‌وه پسمند کراون، نه‌گس داوا بکریت له فورماته‌کانی تردا بریتی له زمانه‌کانی تر، نیزی رید (هاسان خویندنه‌وه)، چاپی گه‌وره، شریتی ده‌نگ، هیلی موون و ئلیکترونیکی همیه.

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