Barium Meal
Follow-Through

Patient Information
This leaflet contains important information about your barium meal and follow through appointment. Should you have any queries after reading it please contact the X-Ray Department you will be attending.

What is a barium meal and follow through?
This is an x-ray of the stomach and small intestine.

How long will it take?
You are advised to allow up to 6 HOURS in the X-Ray Department for the examination to be completed. The actual time will depend on how quickly the barium travels through the bowel.

Do I have to do anything before I come in?
For the examination to be successful it is important that your bowel is as clear and well prepared as possible. The sachet of Picolax granules enclosed is a laxative to help clear your bowel.

Carefully follow the instructions below.

The sachet of Picolax granules must be taken the day before your appointment at about 4.00pm.

1. Dissolve the contents of Picolax granules in a little water, in a tumbler or mug.
2. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, as the solution will become hot.

3. After standing for 5 minutes, add cold water until the tumbler or mug is about half full.

4. Stir well and then drink the solution.

Picolax is a strong laxative, be prepared for frequent bowel movements.

It is also very important for the success of the examination that you have NOTHING TO EAT, DRINK OR SMOKE for 6 HOURS before your appointment time.

**Diabetic patients only**

If you have not received an appointment between 9.00am and 10.00am please contact the X-Ray Department as soon as possible. Those on medication should bring the medication and something to eat for after the x-ray.

**Women of child bearing age**

To ensure that you are not pregnant, you should have this examination between the 1st day of your menstrual period and the 28th day.

If you have not started a menstrual period during the 28 days before your appointment or are actively trying for a family, please contact the department as soon as possible.
Do I need to bring anything with me?
You are advised to bring a dressing gown if you have one. Do not bring unnecessary amounts of money or valuables.

What happens during a barium meal and follow through?
You will firstly be asked to change into an examination gown and your dressing gown.

There may be a short examination where you will be asked to stand on a special table and the radiologist will ask you to drink some of the barium so that a short series of x-rays can be taken.

This is a harmless liquid similar in consistency to a milkshake. After drinking about a cupful of barium you will need to wait while it travels through the intestines.

From time to time you will be asked either into the original examination room or a second one so that x-rays can be taken at intervals until the barium has passed sufficiently through the intestine.

The exact sequence, and whether you sit or lie down when waiting will depend on your own symptoms and the radiologist performing the examination.
Are there any risks or side-effects involved?

Once the examination is completed you may return to your normal diet. You should drink plenty of fluids for the next 24 hours to help avoid constipation.

Your stools may be paler than usual for the next few days, but this is nothing to be alarmed about. It is just the barium passing through your system.

Please note:
Barium is a dense substance, which may not be completely cleared from your toilet by normal flushing. It may be necessary to use a toilet brush, or to flush more than once to clear any residue from the toilet.

What do I do after the x-ray and when will I get the results?

You may need to make a follow-up appointment in the clinic that referred you to us. This could be either in the Outpatient Department or with your own GP. If you are unsure please ask the staff for advice.