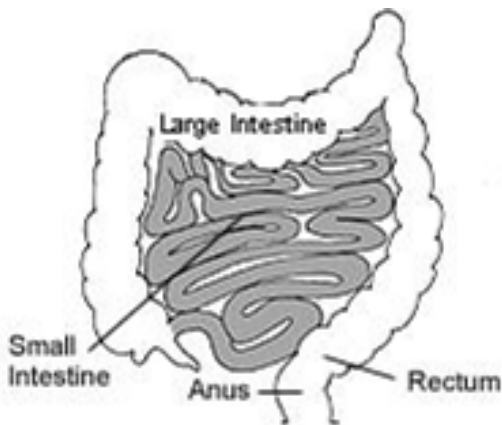


Contrast Enema

What is a contrast enema (CE)?

Note: child-friendly language in green.

- A contrast enema is a set of pictures of your child's large intestine.
- A contrast enema uses a kind of x-ray called **fluoroscopy** and special liquid (**contrast**) to see inside your child's body.



Why is it done?

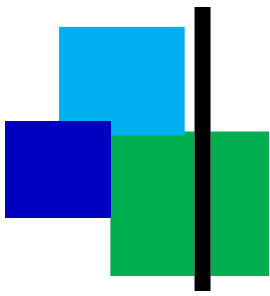
- A contrast enema will show the structure of your child's large intestine and how it is working.
- This x-ray checks for possible reasons your child may have difficulties going to the bathroom.



Fluoroscopy Room

What can I do to help my child?

- Ask for a child life specialists (CLS). They are available to help your child better understand and cope with the scan.
- We encourage you to stay with your child during the scan, though there are some exceptions. Women who may be pregnant cannot be in the fluoroscopy room during the procedure.
- Ask a staff member for more information about these options for support!



What should I expect during the procedure?

The entire test takes about 30 minutes and is done in 3 stages.

Stage 1: Getting ready

- First, your child will change into a hospital gown and will be helped onto the camera bed.
- The technologist (person who helps take the pictures) will then take the first x-ray of your child's belly. Sometimes this step is not needed.
- The technologist will ask your child to lie on their side and pull their knees close to their chest.
- The technologist will then gently slide the tip of a small, slippery tube into your child's rectum (butt) and will secure the tube using tape. If your child has an ostomy or MACE channel, the tube may be inserted there instead; please ask your doctor to confirm.
 - * This may cause your child to feel a sense of pressure.
 - * Encourage your child to take deep breaths to help them relax ..

Stage 2: Pictures

- The radiologist (doctor who will read the x-ray) will then enter the room and position a large camera above your child. The technologist or radiologist will then begin to let contrast flow through the tube into your child's large intestine.
 - * Your child might experience cramping or feel like they need to go to the bathroom. Continue to encourage deep breathing to help ease any discomfort your child may experience.
- Your child will then be helped to turn from side to side beneath the camera so that the radiologist can take pictures of both sides of the body.

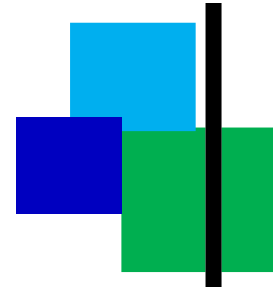
Stage 3: Taking the tube out and going to the bathroom

- When all the pictures have been taken, the contrast is let out through the tube while your child is still lying down.
- The radiologist or technologist will remove the tape and gently slide the tube out of your child's rectum. Your child may be asked to use the bathroom next to the procedure room to help empty any remaining contrast into the toilet.
- A final x-ray picture might be taken after more of the contrast is out of your child's large intestine.



Fluoroscopy Room

Tips for preparing your child for a CE



A child life specialist (CLS) can help support your child for their procedure. They can explain this procedure in developmentally appropriate language and suggesting possible coping strategies. If you would like to speak to a CLS before your appointment, see back for contact information.

Infants (0-12 months old):

- Remember you are the biggest comfort to your child. Your presence will help them feel as safe and secure as possible.
- If you are prepared mentally and physically, you will be more relaxed around your child.
- Bring familiar objects that comfort your child such as a favorite blanket, toy, or pacifier.
- Remember that children use many different ways to cope. Crying is a healthy and normal way for your infant to cope because it allows them to express their emotions.

Toddlers (1-3 years old):

- Begin preparing your child the day before.
- Let your child know that he or she will have special pictures taken so that the doctor can learn about their body.
- Use simple words to describe what your child may experience.
- Reassure your child that you will be close.
- Bring comfort items with you that help your child feel safe, such as a favorite toy or blanket.
- Toddlers are learning to be independent and make their own choices, so try to offer realistic choices. For example, “Which stuffed animal should we bring?”

Preschoolers (3-5 years old):

- Begin preparing your child about 1-3 days in advance.
- Talk to your child about why pictures are being taken. For example, “The doctor wants to take special pictures of the part inside your body that helps you go to the bathroom.”
- Let your child know that a small, soft tube will be placed inside their rectum for the pictures.
- Talk about ways to make help your child relax, such as pretending to blow out birthday candles or breathing deeply to get through any difficult parts of the exam.
- Give your child a job to help them feel involved. Tell them “Your job is to stay still during the pictures, so you have to stay still.”

School Age and Up (6 years and up):

- Prepare your child at least a few days in advance.
- Talk to your child about why the doctor wants to take special pictures of inside their body. For example, for a younger child, “So the doctor can learn more about how your body works.” For an older child, “So the doctor can learn about how your large intestine is working.”
- Explain to your child what they might see, hear, and feel in the order things will occur. Use child-friendly language or real terms depending on your child’s preference and age.
- Talk to your child about different ways to cope. Some children like to know everything that is happening during the test, while some want to direct their attention elsewhere.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.

Child Life

Children's National Hospital Department of Radiology is staffed with Certified Child Life Specialists. Child life specialists are trained to address the emotional and developmental needs of children and their families during healthcare experiences. They can provide procedural preparation and support before and during your child's exam.

Contact Information

If you would like to speak to a child life specialist before your child's radiology appointment, please call **(202) 476-3338** or email **childliferadiology@childrensnational.org**.

Created by Children's National Child Life Services