Barium Enema (BE)
What is a Barium Enema?
Fluoroscopy is a special form of X-ray that produces real-time video images, as opposed to pictures on film, making it possible to see internal organs and joints in motion. A Barium Enema is a fluoroscopic examination of the large intestine, which includes the colon and rectum. Before X-rays are taken, a contrast material called barium sulfate is placed in the rectum to highlight specific areas of the large intestine and create a clear image. The barium eventually passes out of the body with the stools.

CPT Code
74280 Double (Air and Barium most common)
74270 Single

Indications
Diagnose colon cancer or the extent of inflammatory bowel disease, failed colonoscopy.

Contraindications
Severe colitis, recent colonic biopsy, toxic megacolon, known or suspected colonic perforations, pregnancy.

How Does Your Patient Prepare?
The patient should obtain colon preparation from the referring physician.

What Happens During the Test?
The technologist will take a detailed medical history. The patient will be positioned on the exam table. A small rubber tip is inserted into the rectum, where barium is allowed to flow into the intestine. Some cramping may occur as the barium is inserted. Utilizing fluoroscopy, the radiologist will watch as barium flows through the tip to coat and highlight the colon. The technologist will then take a series of X-rays in different positions to view all angles of the colon. The tip is then removed from the rectum. The patient will be asked to use the restroom and return for one final X-ray. The procedure typically takes 30 to 60 minutes to complete.

After the Test
The patient may resume normal activities following the exam. Barium may cause constipation or possible impaction after the procedure. The patient will be instructed to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fiber to expel the barium. Stools will be white or chalky in the short-term.

The Results
A radiologist will analyze the images and send a signed report to the referring physician within one business day.

(Information adapted from Medline Plus and Dr. Paul Keller)

This information is intended for use as merely a guideline for referring physicians and their staff members only. It contains information pertaining to the most commonly ordered exams and indications. However, Shawnee Mission Medical Center Radiology does not recommend any particular examination. Individual radiologist preference or patient circumstances may dictate ordering alternative studies. Although contrast codes are not needed to place an order, the following contrast codes may be used in placing orders:
CT Contrast Q9967, MRI contrast A9577 and A9579.