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Dominion Surgical Defecography



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Preparation and Procedures for a Defecogram

What is a Defecogram?



A defecogram is a special x-ray exam that can detect problems with your pelvic floor and rectum with minimal risk and discomfort to you. The test will be performed by a radiologist (a doctor who specializes in imaging exams such as x-ray, CT, and ultrasound) and a certified

technician with specialized training in defecography. This diagnostic procedure uses barium (a contrast agent) of different thicknesses in the small bowel, rectum, and vagina in females. X-rays of the pelvic floor (bowel, rectum, and vagina) are obtained. The contrast barium allows the organs of the pelvic floor to be seen on x-ray.

How do I prepare for the exam?

To prepare for the exam, you will be asked to give yourself two (2) Fleets enemas. Use three (3) if you have a problem with constipation. Do this at home about two hours prior to the exam. If your exam is in the morning, do not eat or drink after midnight the night before the exam. If your exam is in the afternoon, you may eat a light breakfast the morning of the exam. You will drink a 12 oz bottle of thin barium when you arrive for your exam.



How long will the exam take?

Expect to spend about two and a half hours to complete everything from registration to finishing the exam. The actual exam takes about 30 minutes.

What will the exam be like?

First you will change out of your clothing into a hospital gown. You will lie on your side. If you are a woman, you will be asked to insert barium gel into the vagina. The technician will then place a lubricated enema tip into your bottom and put thick barium paste into your rectum. You will now be seated on a special chair



that does not block x-rays. The radiologist will then instruct you to rest, squeeze, strain, and then evacuate the barium in your rectum. An x-ray videotape will be recorded during these actions (the defecogram).

What happens after the exam?

You will use the bathroom, clean up, get dressed, and will be free to leave. You should drink plenty of fluids and resume your usual diet. It is normal to pass whitish colored stools as the barium leaves your bowels over the next few days. If you have a history of constipation, take a dose of milk of magnesia twice a day until your stool is no longer whitish. A Fleet enema may also help clean the barium out. Women should use a vinegar and water douche to cleanse the barium from the vagina.

How will I learn the results of the study?

The radiologist will study the exam and discuss the results with your doctor. Call your doctor's office to set up a follow-up appointment, if you haven't already, to go over the results of the exam.