DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY
SMALL BOWEL SERIES

OVERVIEW: In radiology, ionizing radiation is used to produce a radiographic image. Before the examination, a radiographer will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you might have. A radiographer, also known as a radiologic technologist, is a skilled medical professional who has received specialized education in the areas of radiation protection, patient care, radiation exposure, radiographic positioning and radiographic procedures.

If you are a woman of childbearing age, the radiographer will ask if there is any possibility you are pregnant. It is important that you tell the radiographer the date of your last menstrual period and whether there is a chance that you may be pregnant.

SMALL BOWEL SERIES: A small bowel series is an examination of the entire small bowel from the duodenum through the ileocecal valve (the junction of the small and large intestines). This examination is performed to look for tumors, malabsorption syndrome (inadequate absorption of nutrients in the intestinal tract), inflammation of the small intestines (i.e. Crohn’s disease) or possible obstruction.

PREP: Nothing to eat or drink after midnight the night before the exam.

PROCEDURE: Prior to your examination, you will be given a hospital gown to wear. You will be given two glasses of barium to drink. Imaging begins immediately after ingestion and continues periodically until the beginning of the large intestine is visualized. This may take anywhere from 15 minutes to several hours. When barium reaches the large intestine, the radiologist will come in and take some additional images. This exam is often done in conjunction with an Upper GI.

RESULTS: After your radiographs have been reviewed by a radiologist, your ordering physician will contact you with the results in approximately 3 days. Your physician then will advise you of the results and discuss what further procedures, if any, are needed.