

Barium Swallow

A Gastrointestinal Series (G.I.) is an x-ray examination of your esophagus (the passage from the mouth to the stomach), the stomach and the duodenum (the first part of your intestine).

A Barium Swallow is an x-ray that takes pictures of the passage from the mouth to the stomach (pharynx and the esophagus).

Preparation

- Preparation begins on the day prior to the exam.
- Patients with diabetes and allergies should consult their Physician for changes in preparation. Inform the office staff and technologist immediately on arrival.
- You may have a normal supper the evening prior to the examination.
- You are not to eat or drink anything from 8 p.m. on the evening prior to the examination until it has been completed.
- No medications are to be taken the morning of the examination.
- Do not swallow water when brushing your teeth in the morning.
- Do not wear jewelry to your appointment.
- Children may not be left unattended in the Waiting Room.
- Please let the Technologist know if you have any allergies or if there is any chance of pregnancy.

Children Under 12

- May eat and drink in the evening.
- Not to eat or drink in the morning.

Newborn - 2 Years

- Nothing to eat or drink 3 hrs. prior to exam time.
- Children with diabetes should fast 2 hrs. prior to the exam.

Procedure

- You will be instructed to change into a hospital gown. You may leave underwear on except an underwire bra. Remove neck chains and earrings.
- You will be instructed to take some carbon dioxide crystals to produce gas and asked not to burp. Immediately after this, you will be asked to drink a flavored barium suspension.
- The X-Ray Technologist will ask you to swallow a white chalk-tasting mixture (barium sulphate and water) several times during the test.
- The Technologist will ask you to move in different positions. The table is motorized and will also move.
- You may be asked to hold your breath during image capture. Your Technologist will tell you if delayed pictures are required.
- If a small bowel follow-through is also ordered you will be asked to drink another cup of barium. This will require images to be taken after extended periods of time to evaluate your small bowel. Please ensure that you have this time available to complete the exam (up to 6 hours, average 1.5 hours). You may be allowed to leave and return to the department.

After the Test

- The Technologist will tell you when your examination is complete. It is recommended that you increase your water/clear fluid intake over the next few days as barium can be constipating.
- The barium is excreted through your stools. Your stool will be lighter in colour. Y
- Your Physician may want you to take a laxative if you should become constipated after the test.