

Upper GI Examination (UGI or Barium Swallow)



Radiology Department

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What is an Upper GI Examination?

It is an x-ray study of the throat, esophagus, stomach and upper part of the small intestine.

How is it done?

Your child swallows a flavored drink (chocolate or strawberry). The drink has barium mixed in. Barium shows up on the x-ray images and it coats the insides of the organs it touches. The esophagus, stomach and intestine are then seen on the x-ray image.

What happens before the test?

Your child changes into a hospital gown with the opening at the back. Please take off any necklaces and/or earrings that your child is wearing, because they show up on the x-ray. The technologist will ask your child if s/he wants the drink flavoured with chocolate or strawberry.

What happens during the test?

The test is done in the Radiology Department. Your child lies or stands against the x-ray table. S/he swallows the barium drink from a bottle or cup. The barium drink moves through the esophagus and stomach and into the duodenum. Images of these organs can be seen on a screen. The radiologist watches the screen while the barium moves through the organs.

How does it feel?

There is no pain with this test. The camera doesn't touch your child. Some children are afraid of lying under the camera. It helps if you tell your child what to expect during the test. You can say something like "a big camera is going to take pic-

tures of what it looks like inside when you swallow. Taking pictures doesn't hurt. The camera might be noisy." The best way to calm your child's fears is to talk about the test before hand in a calm and cheerful way.

Fasting Guidelines:

The stomach must be empty for this test.

Infants under 12 months:

- No solid foods or purees on the day of the examination.
- No breast milk or formula for 6 hours before the examination.
- Only small amounts of clear liquid (like water or apple juice) between 6 and 3 hours before the examination.
- Nothing at all to eat or drink, not even water, for 3 hours before the examination.

Children over 12 months:

- Give your child a good dinner and a bedtime snack the evening before the examination.
- No solid foods at all on the day of the examination.
- Breast milk or formula or clear fluids for up to 6 hours before the examination.
- Nothing at all to eat or drink, not even water, 3 hours before the examination.

How long does it take?

Most exams take about 40 – 50 minutes. Sometimes the radiologist wants to watch until the barium moves through the small intestine. This takes longer. It can take up to 4 hours. Your child doesn't stay on the table during this time.

What are the side effects?

The barium can cause constipation for a few days. Give your child plenty to drink. This helps.

What happens afterwards?

The radiologist will study the images. S/he will write a report to your doctor who ordered the examination. The radiologist may not be able to tell you anything right away. Your doctor will have the results within a day or two. In cases of emergency, your doctor will be contacted immediately. If the examination shows a problem that needs immediate attention, we will call your doctor.

Outpatients:

The hospital is a busy place.

There is pay parking at BC Children's Hospital, but the parking lots are always busy.

You need to register at the Admitting Department before you come to the Radiology Department for the procedure.

Please make sure you allow enough time for all these possible delays. Allow plenty of time to get to your appointment.

The Admitting Department and the Radiology Department are on the main floor of B.C.'s Children's Hospital.