

UPPER GI & SMALL BOWEL SERIES

Your doctor has scheduled you for an x-ray examination called an Upper GI and a Small Bowel. An Upper GI involves drinking barium to allow visualization of the esophagus, stomach, and the first part of the small bowel. A small bowel series includes visualizing the entire small bowel. These exams will take place in the imaging department at the hospital. Here are a few things to know before the exam.

PREPARATION: To prepare for the exam, do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your exam. This will allow time for your stomach to empty. Also, do not chew gum or smoke during this time. You may brush your teeth, but avoid swallowing the water.

BEFORE THE TEST: You will be taken to a dressing room where you will be asked to remove most of your clothing and given a hospital gown to wear during your exam. You will be asked a number of questions by the technologist and radiologist. Among the questions you will be asked are:

- What kind of symptoms are you having?
- Have you had any previous abdominal surgeries?
- For female patients – whether you are or may be pregnant?

THE TEST: As part of the exam, you will be asked to swallow some “fizzies.” This substance will create air in your stomach. It may feel as if you need to burp, but please **do not** – the air is needed for the exam. Next, you will stand on a platform on the x-ray table. You will then be handed a cup of barium and asked to drink while the radiologist is watching on a screen and taking pictures. If you are also having an esophagus exam, a series of rapid pictures will be taken while you are swallowing. Once finished with the cup, the table will be reclined and you will be asked to turn one to three times in a complete circle on the table. This coats the lining of your stomach with the barium. Several x-rays will be taken with you in different positions. The radiologist will tell you which way to turn and when to hold your breath. Towards the end of the exam, you will drink some thinner barium through a straw while lying on your stomach. At this point, the radiologist may or may not raise the table for a few more pictures. This part of the test takes roughly 15 minutes to complete. You will then be given one more glasses of barium to drink. X-rays of your abdomen will then be taken at timed intervals. These times will be determined by how fast the barium is moving through your small bowel. The number of pictures taken during the exam varies with each patient. Once the barium has reached the end of your small bowel, you may be brought back into the x-ray room. At this point, the radiologist will take spot pictures of that valve. He may press on your abdomen while taking these pictures. This exam can take anywhere from 45 minutes to several hours to complete. The time frame depends upon how fast the barium moves through your small bowel.

AFTER THE TEST: After the exam, you are free to resume your normal activities and diet unless told otherwise by your doctor. You will need to drink extra fluids over the next 2 days to help remove the barium from your system. You may see white in your stool for the next day or two. There is a slight chance you may become constipated, but the extra fluids should prevent this.

RESULTS: The radiologist will study your x-rays in great detail after you have left the hospital, and will dictate a report which will be transcribed and sent to your doctor within one to two working days unless other arrangements have been made.

Every effort will be made to make you as comfortable as possible during your examination. If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to the imaging staff at 364-2604.