

Upper GI/Gastrointestinal Series

Patient Information

Overview

An upper GI or Gastrointestinal Series is an x-ray exam of the esophagus, stomach and the duodenum (first part of the small intestine). This exam requires you to drink barium, which is a type of contrast that allows us to see the anatomy of your upper digestive tract. There are a few modifications of this exam; some require you to drink an oil or water based contrast. Others require you to drink thin barium and/or thick barium, along with small gas granules that produce air in your stomach to further outline your digestive tract.

Preparation for the exam:

It is important that you do not eat or drink anything after midnight prior to the day of your exam. Any food or liquid in your stomach can affect the results of the exam. You may not eat or drink anything the morning of your exam, however, if you are taking any medications, you may take them with a small amount of water. If you are diabetic, please consult with your doctor regarding any medications or instructions before your exam. If possible, wait to take any medications until after your exam is complete.

Appointment time:

Your appointment will be scheduled ahead of time by your doctors' office through the hospital scheduling service. Please arrive 30 minutes prior to your exam, as you will be required to register. If you are unsure of your appointment time, need to reschedule, or cancel your appointment, please contact your doctors' office or the hospital scheduling service at 770-219-7666 Menu Option 1. Please try to be patient and be assured that we will get to your study as quickly as possible.

Your UGI Series:

You will be escorted into one of our exam rooms by a radiologic technologist and asked to change into a hospital gown. As an alternative, you may arrive wearing sweatpants and a sweatshirt/tee-shirt that does not have buttons, zippers, snaps, or rivets on them. You will be asked to remove any necklaces, earrings, removable dental work, body piercings/jewelry, and brassiere, as metal and hard plastic interferes with the x-ray image. A plain x-ray of your abdomen, called a "scout film" will be taken prior to your exam. This x-ray will show us your basic anatomy, and ensure that there is nothing on your clothing or jewelry that will obscure our films. This also tells us if you followed the preparation required for your exam. A radiologist and/or radiologic technologist will enter the exam room and get a brief history from you so that he/she can better perform your exam. You will be required to swallow a barium drink and gas granules in various positions on the x-ray table while the radiologist uses a special x-ray camera called a fluoroscope. This fluoroscope is connected to a TV screen, and it allows the radiologist to see your anatomy and take any necessary x-ray pictures to make an accurate diagnosis. The time required for this exam is typically 15 to 30 minutes.

The conclusion of your exam:

You will be given written, take-home instructions at the conclusion of your exam. You may eat and drink immediately following your exam. It is important that you drink plenty of liquids following your exam to avoid constipation from the barium.

Results:

The radiologist will interpret your exam and the results of your exam will be sent to your doctor.



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