

UGI or Esophagram

Why is it done ? Gastrointestinal (GI) X-ray exams involve the use of barium (with or without air), (or a water soluble liquid that shows on x-rays), barium solutions, and x-ray machines. These are used to diagnose problems throughout the digestive tract such as swallowing problems, abdominal pain, unexplained weight loss or bleeding, reflux, vomiting, hernias, intestinal tumors, ulcers, and digestive disorders. The upper GI test examines the esophagus, stomach, and part of the small intestine. These upper GI tests are considered to be safe and pose very little risk.

How to prepare: Preparation usually includes: not smoking, eating, chewing gum, or taking any medications for at least 8-12 hours before the test.

Please tell the technologist if you have an insulin pump.

What to expect during the test: The **upper GI test** is used to examine the esophagus, stomach and part of the small intestine. For this test, you will be positioned on a tilting X-ray table by the technologist and may be secured with straps. The table usually starts in a vertical position, with the patient standing. The patient drinks a contrast solution that contains barium. There will be both thick and thin mixtures of the barium solution you'll be asked to drink, along with possibly ingesting some gas crystals. The doctor or technologist will tell you when to take sips of the solution.

As the barium passes through the digestive tract, it provides an outline of the swallowing process as well as the esophagus, stomach and part of the small intestine. The fluoroscope is positioned over the part of the body being examined and transmits continuous images to the video monitor.

The tilting table may then be placed flat, with you rolling from side to side when instructed, to have the barium coat the inside lining of the esophagus and stomach.

What to expect after the test:

- Generally you can resume your usual activities and normal diet immediately.
 - Drink plenty of fluids.
 - The barium given during the test may cause constipation, so a laxative or enema might be prescribed after the test.
 - It is normal for your stool to have a white or light color for up to three days after the test.
-
- The results of your exam should be available to your physician within 24 hours after the test, Monday through Friday.
 - Your physician will discuss the test results with you.