

ESOPHAGRAM/UPPER GI PROCEDURAL INFORMATION AND POST-PROCEDURAL PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

What is an Esophagram/Upper GI Examination?

An Esophagram/Upper GI study is a radiographic examination of the upper gastrointestinal (GI) tract, specifically the *pharynx* (back of mouth and throat), *esophagus* (a hollow tube of muscle extending from below the tongue to the stomach), the *stomach*, and *duodenum* (first portion of the small bowel). The pharynx, esophagus, stomach, and duodenum are made visible on a television monitor by the use of fluoroscopy (real-time X-ray) and a liquid suspension called Barium (Barium is classified as a medication by the Food and Drug Administration). Barium “highlights” specific structures in the body to enabling the clinician to evaluate and possibly provide a diagnosis for your specific medical issues.

Post-Procedural Instructions

You may resume your normal diet and activities after your Esophagram/Upper GI examination, unless your doctor advises you otherwise. There are no physical restrictions after you examination.

The Barium you ingested for the exam is not absorbed into the body. Barium passes through the entire intestinal tract; your bowel movements may be lighter in color until all of the barium has been excreted. Barium may cause constipation or possibly obstruction if it isn't completely eliminated from your body. *To avoid constipation you should drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fiber to expel the barium from the body.* In rare cases, barium may also cause gastroenteritis (irritation of the stomach and/or small bowel). Drinking plenty of fluids can also help prevent gastroenteritis.

Notify your doctor if you experience any of the following:

- Difficulty with bowel movements or inability to have a bowel movement
- Pain and/or distention of the abdomen
- Stools that are smaller in diameter than normal

Your doctor may give you additional or alternate instructions after the procedure, depending on your particular situation.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please call us at 630-545-7880.