

Upper Gastrointestinal Series

What is an Upper Gastrointestinal Series?

An upper gastrointestinal (UGI) exam uses fluoroscopy (like an X-ray movie) to see the esophagus, stomach and duodenum (first part of the small bowel). At Texas Children's Hospital, we use state-of-the-art equipment that is specially designed for imaging pediatric patients safely using the lowest amount of radiation exposure necessary for the exam.

Why is this exam performed?

An UGI exam allows the Radiologist to gather detailed information about your child's UGI.

Common indications include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease)
- Poor weight gain/FTT (failure to thrive)
- Abdominal pain

What to expect

Since your child will be awake for the exam, one parent or guardian (or two adults if the child has a disability) may be with the child in the exam room. It may be helpful to make arrangements for other siblings. For safety reasons, you will be asked to step out of the exam room if there is a chance you could be pregnant.

Preparing your child is key to the success of this study. To help prepare your child, our Child Life Specialists will help ease your child's fear and anxiety. Please let a staff member know if you are interested in a Child Life consultation at no additional cost.

Your child and the accompanying adult(s) will be taken to the procedure room by a technologist and be asked to change into a gown. The child will need to remove underwear and socks as well. The room has an x-ray machine, a long table, and a television monitor. If you have any questions, the Radiologist or X-ray Technologist will answer them before the test begins.

Your child should not eat or drink anything before the test. The following are the requirements for withholding food and drink by age:

- Newborn to 1 year: 2 hours before the test
- 1 year to 4 years: 4 hours before the test
- 4 years or older: 6 hours before the test

For this 15-60 minute exam:

- Your child will lay down on the long fluoroscopy table.
- Your child will need to drink a liquid contrast called barium from a cup/straw, bottle, syringe or sippy cup while lying down under the camera. This can be flavored with chocolate, strawberry, fruit punch or grape (dependent on location).
- If your child is unable to drink the barium, a thin flexible tube may be placed through his/her nose into the stomach.
- While drinking, the Radiologist/Radiology Physician Extender will move the X-ray camera and ask your child to roll from side to side. The camera will not touch your child.
- You will be provided discharge instructions at the conclusion of your appointment.

After the procedure

Your child may resume normal diet/diet prescribed by your physician after the exam. We ask you to increase your child's fluid intake to prevent constipation. Your child's stool will be light or grey color. This is normal and is related to the ingested barium.

Receiving your Upper Gastrointestinal Series results

Call your doctor for a follow up appointment as instructed. You can also call the doctor who ordered the study for the results 24 to 48 hours after the test. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call Radiology Nursing at 832-826-5371.

If you would like a CD of your child's study, please call the film library at 832-822-1202. The Radiologist's report will also be included on the CD.