



Barium Swallow: Modified Study

Welcome to Dayton Children's. Your child is going to have a modified barium swallow. It is very important for both you and your child to be prepared for the procedure. Being prepared will help you get your child ready for the test and support him/her through it.

The information in this handout describes the modified barium swallow. It is designed to answer your questions and help you explain the test to your child. This information does not replace information given to you by your physicians or other members of your child's health care team.

What is a modified barium swallow?

A modified barium swallow is an x-ray test to look at the mouth, throat and swallowing. This test is done with a feeding expert.

What happens during a modified barium swallow?

Your child will be given a liquid and/or food mixed with barium, which may be flavored. The barium appears white when an x-ray picture is taken. It coats the parts of the mouth and throat used for eating and swallowing and makes them show up better on the x-ray picture. The x-ray doctor (radiologist) and feeding expert watch the barium move from the mouth into the esophagus on a special x-ray television.

What will my child feel during the modified barium swallow?

Your child will not feel the x-ray camera taking pictures. This test does not cause pain. Your child may not like the taste of the liquid or food. Your child should be in the position that you normally use for feeding at home. If needed, your child is placed in a chair that looks like a car seat and is safely fastened in.

How can I help prepare my child for the modified barium swallow?

It is important to tell your child what to expect, including the different sensations he/she may feel. For infants, no preparation is necessary, as long as you understand the procedure. Toddlers require very simple preparation and explanation just before the procedure begins. Older children require more detailed information in advance. Adolescents should be prepared far enough in advance to give them time to ask questions.

When you arrive for your appointment, a staff member will discuss the procedure in an age appropriate way with your child. They will address any concerns that you or your child may have. Our goal is to decrease your child's anxiety and make this a positive experience.

Your child will be in the room about 30 minutes.

How can I help my child during the modified barium swallow?

Many times the mere presence of a parent or caregiver is enough to soothe a child. If your child has a special toy or blanket that provides a sense of security to them, please bring the item with you. Two parents are welcome in the room while we explain, discuss and perform the test. Other family members and pregnant women will be asked to wait in our waiting room. If possible, you will be asked to feed your child during the test. If this is not possible, the feeding expert will feed your child.

What happens after the modified barium swallow?

- 1) Your child may have his/her regular foods after the test is completed or the feeding expert may suggest some changes.
- 2) Your child's bowel movement may be chalky white today and tomorrow. This is normal.

A report will be sent to your referring doctor, usually within a week.

For further questions about this test, please call Dayton Children's Medical Imaging Department: 937-641-3888 or 1-800-228-4055.

Copyright© The Children's Medical Center of Dayton. This material is for educational purposes only. It cannot be reproduced or distributed without permission from Dayton Children's.

Revised 2005