



## **Barium Swallow**

Welcome to Dayton Children's. Your child is going to have a 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 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 physician or other members of your child's health care team.

### **What is a barium swallow?**

A barium swallow is an x-ray test to look at the esophagus. The esophagus is the tube, which connects the mouth with the stomach.

### **What happens during a 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) watches the barium move from the mouth into the stomach on a special x-ray television.

### **What will my child feel during the 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. It is very important for your child not to move during the test. We may use small sandbags, blanket wraps, and/or velcro safety belts to position your child. If your child moves, we may have to take the x-ray again.

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

When and how to prepare your child for a barium swallow depends on his/her age. 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 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. Many children benefit from distraction. You may bring a favorite picture book or simply talk to your child while the x-ray pictures are taken.

**What happens after the barium swallow?**

- 1) Give your child lots to drink today (water and juices are best).
- 2) Your child may have regular foods after the test is completed.
- 3) Your child's bowel movements 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.

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