

Radiology Associates of Ithaca

"YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD RADIOLOGISTS PRACTICING WORLD CLASS IMAGING"
101 Dates Drive, Ithaca, New York 14850

Barium Swallow, Upper GI Series, and Small Bowel Series

What is the test? A barium swallow and upper GI series examine the esophagus (swallowing tube), the stomach, and the first part of the small intestine. A small bowel series examines the loops of the small intestine to the point at which it connects with the colon (large intestine).

These tests are typically used to diagnose ulcers, inflammation, obstructions, and other irregularities.

How do I prepare? Please plan to arrive at the Imaging Services Department 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. You will be asked not to eat anything after midnight the day before the test. On the morning of the study, refrain from eating or drinking prior to the test. You should consult your physician if you are diabetic or if you are scheduled to take any medications during the 24 hours before your appointment.

What can I expect during the procedure? A technologist will help you onto an adjustable table so that X-rays can be taken from several angles. You will then be given a flavored barium solution to drink. If necessary, you may also be asked to drink a carbonated beverage or medication that produces gas. You will be asked to roll around on the table to coat the gastrointestinal tract with the barium solution to optimize images. This improves the clarity of the X-ray. You may feel bloated during the procedure.

A barium swallow and upper GI series may take as long as one hour to complete. A small bowel series takes from one to four hours to complete.

After the test? Drink plenty of fluids. Unless otherwise notified, you may return to your regular diet and resume normal activities. Occasionally, a laxative or enema may be necessary to prevent constipation; consult your physician. Your bowel movements may look chalky for a day or two after the procedure.

How and when will I get my test results? Typically, within 48 hours a written report of your test results will be sent to your referring physician, who will review them with you. Additional time (3 to 5 days) may be required if we are comparing these test results to previous findings from another hospital.

Where are these tests performed? Barium Swallows, Upper GI Series, and Small Bowel Series are performed in the Imaging Services Department at Cayuga Medical Center, 101 Dates Drive off NYS Route 96 in Ithaca.