Upper Gastrointestinal Study (UGI)

About the test

An upper gastrointestinal study (UGI) is an x-ray test of the stomach and esophagus, the tube that goes from your mouth to your stomach. Your doctor has ordered this test to check:

- The cause of stomach problems
- If there are changes in the stomach lining due to disease
- To check your recovery if you have recently had surgery

Important to tell us

- If you are pregnant, or think you might be, tell the radiologist before the test is done.
- If you have an allergy to contrast medicine, tell the doctor or radiologist.

Preparing for the test

Your stomach must be empty for this test. Please follow these instructions:

- If you have a morning visit, do not eat or drink anything after midnight before your test. If you have an afternoon visit, do not have anything to eat or drink for at least 4 hours before your test.
- You may take any necessary morning medicines with a small amount of water. If you take medicines that do not have to be taken in the morning, wait until after the test to take them.
- If you have diabetes and take insulin, call the doctor who treats your diabetes and ask if you will need to adjust your insulin dosage as you will not be eating your normal diet before this test.

Day of the test

- Please arrive 20 minutes before your appointment time.
- Bring with you a list of your current medicines, your insurance card, and a photo ID.
During the test

- This test may take 1 hour. The staff will try to make you as comfortable as possible, however, please let us know if you have any discomfort.

- The radiologist, a doctor who specializes in radiology, will ask you to drink a cup of a barium mixture. The barium mixture coats the lining of your esophagus to your stomach so that x-rays can track the path through the digestive system.

- You also may be asked to drink a small amount of crystal fizzes and water mixture to slightly expand your stomach. Once the doctor has completed the first part of the test, a technician will take a series of x-rays.

- The radiologist will study your test and send a report to the doctor who referred you for the visit. You may contact your doctor in 3 business days for a report.

After the tests

- If you have no other tests scheduled, you will be able to return to your normal diet after the test.

- Drink 6 to 8 glasses water in the next 24 hours to help move the barium mixture through your system. Do not be alarmed if your stool is white due to the barium for a day or so after the test.

When to call your doctor

Contact your doctor if:

- You have not passed the barium in your stool in 2 to 3 days after the exam.
- You have a pencil-thin stool or notice a change in your usual bowel habits.
- You have pain in your lower abdomen (belly) or stomach.
- Your stools are not normal in 3 days.
- You have questions or concerns about your illness, medicine or the barium swallow procedure.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call 614-293-4333. Radiology Scheduling will connect you to a qualified staff member who will answer your questions.