



Gastric Emptying Exam



What is a gastric emptying exam?

A gastric emptying exam is a test that measures how fast your child's stomach digests food. We also study esophageal reflux in your child during this exam. Esophageal reflux is when acid from your child's stomach moves backwards into their esophagus.

A tracer (radiopharmaceutical) is needed for this exam. We will mix it in milk or formula and have your child drink it. If your child does not eat by mouth, we will use their G-tube.

How do I prepare my child for the exam?

Your child cannot have anything to eat or drink for 4 hours before the exam. Your child should not receive barium (radiographic contrast agent) 48 hours before the exam.

Milk or formula is most often used for this exam, but other options are available. Solid food is sometimes requested by the ordering doctor.

If your child has an allergy to milk, please contact Radiology at 206-987-2133 ahead of time.

If your child has a G-tube, please bring enough formula for one feeding, as well as the right tubing and connectors.

Dress your child comfortably in clothes without zippers or metal snaps. Sweats are a good choice.

To Learn More

- Radiology
206-987-2133
- Ask your child's nurse
or doctor
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask
your child's nurse.
- From outside the
hospital, call the
toll-free Family
Interpreting Line
1-866-583-1527.
Tell the interpreter
the name or extension
you need.
- For Deaf and hard of
hearing callers
206-987-2280 (TTY).

We have videos your child can watch or they can bring their favorite video or DVD from home to watch during the exam.

How do we check in for the appointment?

Arrive 20 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Being late can affect other appointments and can delay your appointment. If you will be late, please call Radiology at 206-987-2133.

Check in at the 4th floor registration desk inside the Whale entrance. After you complete registration, you will be directed to the Radiology reception area.

What happens during the exam?

The technologist will explain the study to you and your child. Based on your child's preference or medical situation, we will ask them to drink milk (chocolate or white) or formula. Your child will need to finish the milk within 5 minutes. If your child does not eat by mouth, the technologist will give formula through your child's G-tube.

After drinking, your child will lie on the table and the scan will begin. We will take pictures for one hour. The camera will be above the table and will come close to, but will not touch, your child. Your child will be able to watch a movie during the scan. We do not use anesthesia for this exam.

What happens after the exam?

There are no special instructions for your child to follow after the exam.

The images from your child's test are reviewed within 24 hours and a report will be sent to the doctor who ordered the test.