



Upper GI Series with a Small Bowel Follow-Through



What is an upper GI series with a small bowel follow-through?

An upper GI (gastrointestinal) series with a small bowel follow-through is a test to look at your child's esophagus, stomach, small intestine and the beginning of the large intestine. The test is done using a kind of X-ray (fluoroscopy) and a contrast agent that your child will swallow. The contrast agent is called barium.

How do I prepare my child for the test?

Your child must have an empty stomach for this test. This means that your child cannot have anything to eat or drink by mouth or tube before the test for a period of time based on their age. The times are as follows:

- 0 to 2 years – nothing to eat or drink for 3 hours before the test
- 2 years and older – nothing to eat or drink for 8 hours before the test

If your child has an allergy to radiographic contrast, we will give you more instructions about how to prepare your child for the test.

Dress your child comfortably, in clothes that are easy to take off. Sweat pants and shirt are a good choice. Your child will be given a gown to change into. You may want to bring a snack or drink for your child to have after the test.

How do we check in for the appointment?

If you will be late or have questions about testing for either location, please call Radiology at 206-987-2089.

For Seattle Campus:

- Arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Being late can affect other appointments and can delay yours.
- Check in at the level 6 registration desk inside the Ocean entrance. After you complete registration, you will be sent to the Radiology reception area.
- Upon arrival, females 12 years and older will be asked to provide a urine sample for pregnancy screening.

For Bellevue Campus:

- Arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Being late can affect other appointments and can delay yours.
- Check in at the 2nd floor registration desk. After you complete registration, you will be directed to a seating area to wait.
- Upon arrival, females 12 years and older will be asked to provide a urine sample for pregnancy screening.

What happens during the test?

The technologist will explain the test to both you and your child. Your child will need to drink a barium shake, which will make their stomach and intestines show on the X-ray screen. This shake will be mixed with a cherry sugar syrup or orange soda, depending on your child's age and preference. Please let us know if your child has any sensitivity to sugars before we begin.

We will take X-rays while your child is swallowing the barium and as it flows through their stomach and a portion of their small intestine. A doctor called a radiologist does this by using the fluoroscopy machine, or camera, to follow where the barium goes. The test is not painful, and the camera does not touch your child.

Your child will need to move around in different positions so that we can see the correct anatomy. The radiologist and technologist will help guide your child. If your child is an infant, they will be immobilized for the study. This allows us to move the child safely and easily during the procedure.

This part of the test is called an upper GI series, and it takes about 45 minutes.

The small bowel follow through series is like the upper GI series, but the test takes longer. This test takes from 2 to 6 hours, depending on your child's body and how quickly their digestive system works. We will take images throughout the test until the barium has moved through your child's small bowel and into the large bowel.

To Learn More

- Radiology
206-987-2089
- Ask your child's
healthcare provider
- 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.

Parents can stay in the room with their child. Please make other arrangements for siblings. We offer a playroom for siblings, but please note that your child must be at least 3 years old and be potty-trained to be left in the playroom. Women who are pregnant or may be pregnant will be asked to leave the room during the test. Please make sure to bring someone else with you who can stay with your child during the test, if needed.

Does the upper GI series with a small bowel follow-through use radiation?

Yes, your child will be exposed to a small amount of radiation. We understand that radiation dose is a special concern for children. To minimize how much radiation your child is exposed to, we customize the x-rays based on your child's age, weight and area to be examined.

If you have questions about the exam and whether it is needed, please contact the doctor who ordered the exam for your child.

What happens after the test?

After the test, slowly give your child fluids. The barium may cause constipation, and fluids will help. Encourage your child to take a few sips of water every half hour.

If there are any problems or questions about constipation, please call your primary care provider.

When your child does have a bowel movement, it may look white or grayish – do not be alarmed! The barium may cause it to change color.

How do we get the test results?

The images from your child's radiology procedure are typically reviewed by a radiologist within 24 hours and a report will be sent to the doctor who ordered the test. If you have a clinic or doctor appointment scheduled, the doctor will review the results with you then. If you do not have a visit scheduled, you should call your child's doctor for the results.