

Greenwich Hospital

What is an Upper GI Series?

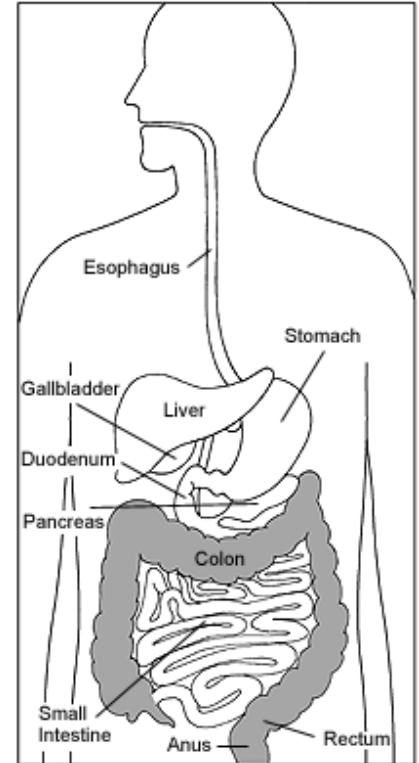
PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is an Upper GI Series?

An upper gastrointestinal series, or upper GI series, is an x-ray examination of the upper digestive tract which consists of the esophagus, stomach and duodenum. The purpose of this test is to diagnose potential problems in these areas.

How should I prepare for the upper GI series?

- You will be asked not to eat or drink anything after midnight of the night before your examination. Your doctor will provide specific instructions for you to follow.
- You should allow 30 to 45 minutes for this examination.
- You will be asked to remove metal items such as jewelry, eyeglasses, and clothing with zippers or metal snaps which may show up on and obscure the images.
- **Female patients: if there is any possibility you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, it is important to tell this to the technologist BEFORE the exam!**



Source: National Digestive Diseases Clearinghouse @ <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov>

How is the upper GI series performed?

- You will be given a thick, white liquid called Barium to drink. Barium coats the lining of your digestive tract so that it can be seen on the x-ray images.
- You will be asked either to lie down on an examination table or to stand upright against the table so that x-ray images can be taken.
- The radiologist will then use a special x-ray machine called a fluoroscope to take images of your digestive tract as the barium moves through it. The radiologist will be looking for problems that may be present, such as ulcers, blockages, or abnormal growths.
- The technologist will take additional x-ray images to complete the study when the radiologist is finished with the first part of the examination.
- After the examination is completed, you will be asked to wait for a short time while the radiologist makes sure all of the needed information is on the films. Sometimes more x-rays may be required.

What should I expect after the upper GI series?

You will have whitish colored bowel movements for up to a few days after the test from the barium. You should drink extra fluids after the procedure (unless you are on a fluid restriction) to prevent constipation. Speak with your doctor about taking a laxative if you have a tendency to get constipated.

Is an upper GI series safe?

X-rays are a form of energy that exists in nature, emanating from outer space, rocks, and even soil. The x-ray machine produces an x-ray beam which is carefully limited to the body part being examined. No radiation remains in your body after the examination.

An Important Note

For female patients, if there is any possibility you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, it is important to tell this to the technologist before the x-ray.

Speak with the x-ray technologist if you have questions or concerns about your upper GI series. A formal report will be sent to your doctor within days following your procedure. Your doctor will speak with you regarding the results.

Source: Greenwich Hospital Radiology Department

National Digestive Diseases Clearinghouse @<http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov> retrieved 3/05.

For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org and Click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education

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