

WHAT IS A BARIUM SWALLOW STUDY?

The purpose of this test is to study the function and appearance of the pharynx and esophagus. You will be given barium (a white chalky liquid) to drink during this test. Barium is a contrast agent that improves the quality of the images.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The test may require you to stand, lie flat, or turn from side to side. Multiple images of your anatomy will be taken using a radiographic camera. The images will be taken at timed intervals during the exam.

The test takes approximately 30 minutes. The technologist will give you discharge instructions after the completion of the test.

HOW TO PREPARE

Follow these guidelines:

- Please inform the technologist if you are allergic to barium or any contrast agent.
- Please let the technologist know if you are pregnant. Many imaging tests are not performed during pregnancy.
- **You must have nothing to eat or drink (including medications) after midnight the day of the test.**
- If you are scheduled for an afternoon appointment, do not eat or drink for at least 6 hours before your test.
- If you are diabetic, please consult your physician as to any special instructions concerning your diabetes medication prior to the test.
- Please bring your current home medications or a list of your medications with you the day of the test.
- You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and change into a hospital gown to get a more accurate picture.
- Remove jewelry, removable dental hardware, eye glasses, and any metal objects or clothing that might interfere with the images.

RESULTS

A radiologist will review your images and send a report to your doctor who ordered the test in 48 hours. You'll get a call from your doctor's office to discuss the results and next steps. To check your results in our secure, online patient portal, My UNC Chart, visit www.myuncchart.org.