



Upper GI

Patient Information



What is an Upper GI:

An upper GI is a set of x-rays used to look at the esophagus, stomach and duodenum (the first part of the small intestine). When only the throat and esophagus need to be looked at, an exam called an esophagram, which is like an Upper GI, is used.

Why is an Upper GI Done:

An upper GI is done to look at how well your body takes in food or to find problems in the esophagus, stomach or small intestine.

- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Blood in your stools
- Blood in your vomit
- Diarrhea
- Having a hard time swallowing
- Rectal bleeding
- Regurgitation (reflux)
- Very bad indigestion
- Weight loss

An Upper GI can be used to find an ulcer, blockage, a strange growth or tumor, Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), hiatal hernia, objects in the airway or inflammation (redness and swelling) of the stomach or small intestine.

Getting Ready for the Exam:

Your health care provider will tell you how to get ready for your upper GI exam. You will be asked not to eat or



drink for 8 hours before the exam. You should not chew gum or smoke during that time as these things may also change the clearness of the pictures.

What You Can Expect During the Exam:

You will be asked to change into a gown and take off all jewelry. You may be asked to swallow crystals to help make a gas in your stomach. This will help make the pictures from the exam clearer.

The technologist (the person doing your exam) will ask you to stand on a platform as you drink a cup of liquid barium, which looks like a light-colored milkshake. The barium will show up white on the x-ray. As you drink the barium, the radiologist will watch the liquid on the fluoroscope as it goes into your esophagus and stomach. The fluoroscope is a special x-ray machine that shows pictures on a screen like a TV. You may be asked to move around to make sure the barium is over all parts of the upper GI tract, and could be asked to drink more barium throughout the exam. At some point during the exam you will lie on a table.

After The Exam:

When your test is done, you may eat normally and take any medicines you were asked to stop taking. You should drink an extra 4 to 8 glasses of water after your exam to help move the barium through your body. The barium may color stools gray or white for up to 72 hours after the exam. If you have constipation (are not able to go to the bathroom) a mild laxative can be used.

Risks:

Some radiation is used with an upper GI, but any risks of the radiation are much less than the benefits of upper GI exams. The barium contrast material may also cause constipation.

Report:

Results from the exam will not be ready right away. A radiologist will look at your pictures and report back to your health care provider in 24 to 48 hours, Monday through Friday. Your health care provider will give you the results.

Directions:

Waverly Health Center is at 312 Ninth Street, SW in Waverly. Please go through the green entrance and check in at the registration desk. When you have finished your check in, you will be taken to the radiology waiting area.