



What is barium swallow, barium meal and follow through?

Barium swallow, barium meal and follow through examination is a series of X-rays to show your child's upper digestive tract (oesophagus, stomach and the small intestine) by swallowing a white liquid called barium. Your child's doctor has asked for this test and we would like to explain this examination to you.

What is barium?

Barium is a white liquid with a milk shake texture containing a radiopaque substance (barium sulphate) which makes the upper digestive tract visible.

We have chocolate or strawberry Nesquik to flavour the barium.

What happens in the barium meal and follow through examination?

This test is carried out in the Medical Imaging Department at The Children's Hospital at Westmead. In this examination, a series of X-ray film are taken of your child's upper digestive tract.

The test is performed in a room with an X-ray table and a large camera above it. The camera is linked to a television screen where an X-ray image of the upper digestive tract can be observed.

The doctor / nurse will lay your child on the X-ray table and offer a chocolate or strawberry flavoured white liquid through a cup or a bottle while lying down.

As the barium is swallowed, the flow of the barium will be observed and X-ray pictures will be taken. The barium will temporarily coat the inside lining of the

oesophagus, stomach and small bowel. Your child will then be asked to turn in a different direction so that the barium which they swallowed will flow through the tract quickly. As the organs fill with barium, loops of black gut will be seen on the television screen and a series of X-ray films will be taken.

The pictures are checked and the test is complete.

How to prepare for this examination

It is very important that your child stops eating and drinking according to the instructions given to you, as food in the stomach and intestine could prevent a clear outline of these structures when they are examining the X-rays. If in doubt, please contact the hospital for advice.

Age	Preparation
0 - 6 months	Nothing to eat or drink for 2 - 3 hours prior to the procedure.
6 months - 2 years	Nothing to eat or drink for 4 hours prior to the procedure.
2 - 6 years	Nothing to eat or drink for 6 hours prior to the procedure.
> 6 years	Nothing to eat or drink from 12 midnight.

**Diabetics (INSULIN DEPENDANT):
Fast for 3 hours prior to the examination.**

Fact Sheet

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Advice for parents

- Your child will pass white stools for a few days following the procedure.
- Ensure that your child has plenty of fluid to drink because the barium may cause constipation.
- Book an appointment to see your referral doctor within a week's time.

Remember

- Your child will feel more comfortable if a parent or carer stays with them during the examination.
- Women who are pregnant should not stay in the room while the X-rays are being taken.
- Other children under 18 years can not stay in the X-ray room.

This fact sheet is for education purposes only.
Please consult with your doctor or other health professional
to make sure this information is right for your child.

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the
children's
hospital at Westmead

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