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X Ray Department

Bon Secours Hospital

Tralee, Co Kerry.

***Patient Information Leaflet
For a***

Paediatric Barium Meal





Barium Meal

This leaflet will give you the following information:

- What is a Barium Meal?
- How should I prepare?
- What will I experience during and after the procedure?
- Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

What is a Barium Meal?



A Barium Meal is an x ray examination of your child's stomach and small bowel.

The stomach does not show up well on ordinary x ray images. Therefore your child will be asked to drink a chalky white liquid called barium which will coat the lining of the stomach. We will use a special form of x rays called fluoroscopy allowing us to visualize the stomach in "real time" on a monitor.

How Should I Prepare

- Your child will be admitted to the Children's Ward before attending the x ray department for the barium meal examination.
- Before a barium meal your child's stomach must be empty. Your child must fast for four hours beforehand. We will endeavor to

schedule your child's test as early as possible in the morning to minimise their discomfort.

- You will need to bring three bottles to the x ray department; one with sterile (boiled water allowed to cool) lukewarm water, one filled with your child's milk / formula and one empty bottle.
- For older children who are not bottle fed please bring two beakers (ideally a favorite beaker that will be familiar and comforting); one beaker must contain sterile lukewarm water.
- Please ensure your child takes their usual prescribed medications unless clearly advised otherwise by your doctor.
- You should inform the x ray staff if your child has any allergies or if they have diabetes.
- One parent / guardian can remain with your child throughout the examination however if there is any possibility that you may be pregnant you cannot remain in the x ray room once the test has commenced - it is advisable to find an alternative escort so that your child will have a familiar person with them for reassurance and comfort.
- A barium meal is an x ray procedure therefore metal objects appear on x ray images; you should avoid dressing your child in clothing with snappers and zips. Replace metal nappy pins with adhesive tape.
- Bring a change of clothing with you incase of spillage.
- Girls of twelve years and over will be asked to tell the Radiographer when the first day of their last period was. Current radiation legislation policy dictates that female patients who have not gone through the menopause must have had a period within ten days before the x ray test.

What will I experience during and after the procedure?

- When you arrive in the x ray department the Radiographer will take the three bottles or beakers from you. They will mix some of the liquid barium with the contents of the bottles. Once everything has been prepared the Radiographer will escort you into the examination room.
- The Radiographer will ask you to lay your child on the x ray table and will take this opportunity to explain the procedure to both you and your child. You will be asked to wear a lead apron so that you can remain at your child's side throughout the test.

- The equipment will consist of an x ray table and x ray camera. The x ray camera is suspended over the table. The Radiologist and Radiographer will remain in the room throughout the test however they will stand behind a lead screen while taking the x ray images. Please talk to the X ray staff if you have any concerns or worries.
- Your child will be asked to drink the barium mixture during the examination; if they are not old enough you will be asked to bottle feed them. Young children will often do so willingly; as they will be hungry as a consequence of fasting. Older children may be intimidated by their strange surroundings and may require your encouragement to drink the barium and stay still for the x ray images.
- The Radiologist will take a series of x ray images as the barium coats the stomach and travels to the small bowel. They may give you some instructions on helping your child turn from side to side so that we can better visualize the anatomy of the stomach and bowel.
- Once the Radiologist is satisfied that all the necessary images have been taken you can return to the children's ward.
- A barium meal is usually completed within 20 minutes.

After the examination

- The Children's Ward will be able to provide you with information regarding discharge times, procedures and advice.
- Your child can resume a normal diet (unless specifically told otherwise by your doctor).
- Their stools may appear white for a day or two - do not worry this is the barium liquid passing from their bowel.
- It is advisable to encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids for two - three days to avoid constipation (or until their stools are no longer white in appearance).

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

- A radiologist will analyze the images and send a report to the doctor who referred you for the barium meal. Your doctor / consultant will discuss the results of the test with you on the ward (usually within a few hours of the examination).

If you have any further questions please contact your doctor or the x ray department (066 7149869).

Please cancel your appointment by phone if you are unable to come - preferably at least one day before the examination date.



Questions

We understand that there may be questions or queries that either you or your child would like to be answered and sometimes you may forget what you want to ask.

The space below has been included for you to write down any questions or queries that you may have.