



Diagnostic Imaging

Barium Swallow and Meal - Babies

What is a barium meal?

This is an examination of the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and the first part of the bowel. As the baby drinks, the barium can be seen on the monitor.

What does the procedure involve?

We will need your baby to drink a special liquid (barium) so the doctor can see the oesophagus and stomach. Barium is a white chalky liquid. Your baby will drink the liquid through a straw or from a bottle or beaker; it can be helpful for you to bring your baby's usual bottle. The drink is not unpleasant and can be mixed with your child's milk or squash, but some children find it difficult to drink.

The patient will be asked to drink the liquid lying down, whilst the x-ray camera is over their tummy. As the baby drinks, the barium can be seen on the monitor.

The test will take approximately 20 minutes.

We normally ask one parent/carer to stay with the baby during the examination to provide support and encouragement. We cannot allow you to stay with your baby if you are pregnant. It is important to protect an unborn child. If you are, or may be, pregnant it would be a good idea to bring someone else who can stay with your baby.

Is there any preparation?

Please bring a clean baby's nappy and sterile teat with you.

After the examination

The barium will make your baby's stools (poo) pale in colour for a couple of days after the examination; this is nothing to worry about.

Sometimes barium can cause constipation, so it is a good idea to ensure your baby drinks plenty of fluid after the examination to prevent this.

Results

Your baby's imaging examination will be reported on by a Diagnostic Imaging specialist ie Radiologist, Sonographer, Reporting Radiographer.

The report will be issued to the referring GP or Consultant team who will inform you of the next steps in your child's care pathway.

The availability of the report can vary dependent on the type and complexity of the imaging examination.

Contact Numbers

We hope you have found this information useful, but if you have any questions or concerns, please contact us on (01305) 254428.

About this leaflet

Author:	Linda Chappell, Operational Superintendent
Written:	August 2019
Updated & Approved:	August 2022
Review Date:	August 2025
Edition:	v3

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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