

Upper Gastrointestinal Series (UGI)



Overview

This is an x-ray exam. It can help your doctor identify problems with your esophagus, stomach, and the first part of your small intestine. You may benefit from this exam if you have a problem such as heartburn, indigestion or unexplained pain in your chest or abdomen.

Preparation

Before the procedure, you change into a gown. You lie on an x-ray table. You need to swallow a special contrast liquid. Commonly, this liquid contains a metallic compound called barium sulfate. The contrast liquid coats the inside of your gastrointestinal tract. It helps make these structures visible.

Exam

The radiologist takes a series of x-rays. A special type of x-ray called a fluoroscope may also be used to record video. During the exam, you may be moved into different positions on the table. You may be asked to swallow a pill or a powder. You may be asked to drink a beverage through a straw. And, the radiologist may press on your abdomen. All of these things will help the radiologist capture images of your gastrointestinal tract.

End of Procedure

When the exam is complete, you can go home and return to your normal activities. Your doctor may give you tips for things to eat or drink that will help pass the contrast material from your body. Your stools may be a lighter color until all of the contrast material is passed.

