

# Southernex



Imaging Group Ltd

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## **BARIUM MEAL**

### Patient Information

**This procedure is an examination of the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and small intestine. It is carried out by a radiologist (a doctor trained in reading x-rays) and a radiographer (medical imaging technologist).**

The examination demonstrates the anatomy of these regions and also the function (swallowing, emptying of the stomach, passage of food through the intestine, etc.).

There are many reasons why this procedure may be requested and why it is appropriate for you. This will have been explained to you by your doctor.

The examination requires special equipment to enable the radiologist to watch on a television monitor whilst you drink the special fluid to outline the area being examined. This equipment is not available in all our x-ray rooms, so you may need to go to a particular location.

#### **Preparation**

You will need to prepare for the examination by fasting (not eating or drinking) for at least six hours before the x-ray appointment. This ensures that the stomach is empty, as any food or fluid taken before the examination can give misleading results.

#### **Examination Time**

The examination will take approximately 30 minutes unless your doctor also wants the small intestine examined, which may take a further 1-2 hours depending on the speed of the fluid through the bowel.

#### **Procedure**

You will be asked to change into a gown for this procedure to ensure that there are no confusing shadows from your clothing on the films.

To outline the stomach etc., and to assess the swallowing mechanism, you are given a cup of heavy, chalky-tasting fluid (barium sulphate) as well as some small amounts of other fluids or small tablets. These fluids fill the stomach with a combination of barium and gas to distend the walls of the stomach and show the stomach lining.

You may feel bloated, but the fluid is not unpleasant to drink. You will need to be turned into various positions on the X-ray table, both lying down and standing, to allow films to be taken of all parts of the stomach and small bowel.

The films and report are usually available for collection 1 hour after the end of the procedure, or they can be delivered direct to your doctor.

**NOTE:** some patients may experience constipation for a few days afterwards as the barium passes through the bowel. Drinking fluids helps and a mild laxative may be useful if symptoms persist.

**For further enquiries about this procedure, contact our rooms at:**

Caboolture (07) 5495 2077

Clayfield (07) 3262 8588

Gympie (07) 5482 1196

Hervey Bay (07) 4124 3133

Ipswich (07) 3812 8611

Maryborough (07) 4121 2767

Nambour (07) 5441 3677

Noosa Junction (07) 5447 2312

Strathpine (07) 3881 2888

The Wesley Hospital (07) 3371 9588

**[www.southernxray.com.au](http://www.southernxray.com.au)**

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