Upper Gastrointestinal (GI) Series

An upper GI series is a test that uses x-rays to take pictures of the upper digestive tract which is the esophagus and the stomach. It may be combined with a Small Bowel Series, which includes pictures of the small bowel.

Before the upper GI series, we will ask your child to:
- Remove clothing.
- Change into a gown.
- Go to the bathroom to empty his/her bladder.

Because the upper GI series involves x-rays, we ask that the parent wear a lead apron. Pregnant women must step out during the procedure.

A large camera mounted on the side of the table will take x-ray pictures. It will come close to your child but will not touch him/her.

During the upper GI series, your child will lie on the x-ray table. The technologist will take a picture of his/her abdomen.

The pediatric radiologist (doctor) will ask your child to drink contrast which shows up on x-ray.

Your child will need to hold very still while the pictures are taken. Parents are encouraged to help their child stay still.

As your child swallows, the stomach and bowel fill with contrast, and the doctor will take more pictures. Your child will be asked to move side to side.

It can take up to 30 min to 2 hrs to complete this test because pictures are taken as the contrast moves from the mouth to the small bowel. There will be opportunities for your child to move around between pictures.

Once the test is done, the doctor will explain the results to you.

After the upper GI series, your child can resume his/her normal diet and activities.
Preparation Tips
1. Explain to your child what will happen in words that he/she can understand.
2. Tell your child you will be there.
3. Explain the importance of holding still while pictures are being taken.
4. Practice taking slow, deep breaths, as this will help your child to relax. (Like blowing bubbles or blowing out birthday candles).
5. For INFANTS: Hold the last feeding before the time of the scheduled test.
6. For CHILDREN (2 yrs and older) - nothing by mouth for 4 hrs before the time of the scheduled test.

You may bring an item such as a blanket, stuffed animal, or bottle to comfort your child during the test.

A pediatric radiology team, consisting of a pediatric radiologist, a technologist, a child life specialist and a nurse, is available to assist you before, during and after the procedure.

One of these members will be contacting you prior to the appointment to further discuss any of your needs.

Department of Radiology: 315-464-5189
Nurse: 315-464-7405
Child Life Specialist: 315-464-7217