

# Barium swallow/meal

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET SCR02



## Your appointment:

Date: .....

Time: .....

Location: .....

Please see our website for more branch details.

### Duration of examination

A barium swallow or meal examination will take approximately 20 minutes. If a follow through has also been requested this can take a further 2-4 hours

### Please bring with you:

- > Your request form
- > All previous relevant imaging
- > Medicare and any Healthcare cards

### Payment on the day of the examination is requested.

For more information on this procedure please call one of our branches.

For more information regarding Benson Radiology please visit:

[bensonradiology.com.au](http://bensonradiology.com.au)

**Benson**  
radiology

Experience Precision Care

## What is a barium swallow and meal?

A barium swallow demonstrates the oesophagus while a barium meal is performed to examine the stomach and duodenum. It is performed on specialised equipment that is not available at all branches.

A combination of barium and gas is used to temporarily coat the wall linings of the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum making the anatomy of these areas visible under x-ray. This allows detection of diseases such as ulcers and tumours, as well as demonstrating function such as the swallowing mechanism and emptying of the stomach.

## What preparation is required?

You need to fast for eight hours prior to your examination. This ensures your stomach is completely empty, as any food or fluid in the stomach can give misleading results. Please inform our reception staff at the time of booking if you are diabetic so an appropriate appointment can be made.

## What will happen during the examination?

You will be asked to change into a gown. You may be given an injection or medicine to drink to either slow down or accelerate the movement of barium through your stomach depending on the reason you are having the examination.

You will then be given a small portion of gas producing granules to drink. The gas distends the wall of your stomach providing

better images of the stomach lining. This may make you feel like burping. Please try to avoid this as it will release the gas from your stomach.

You will then be asked to lie on an x-ray table. The radiologist (specialist medical imaging doctor) uses fluoroscopy (a special x-ray) to visualise your gastrointestinal tract on a television monitor as you drink a chalky barium liquid.

You will be asked to lie and possibly stand in several different positions and momentarily hold your breath while the imaging is performed. Parents may accompany children.

## Are there any risks?

You will receive a small dose of x-ray radiation. The benefits of detecting disease are believed to outweigh any potential risks from receiving such a small dose. **However, please advise the Radiographer if you are, or think you may be, pregnant.**

## After the examination

It is important to drink a lot of fluid for the 24-48 hours following your procedure and to resume your normal diet so that you do not experience constipation. If you experience constipation-type symptoms we advise you to take a mild laxative.

The images will be reviewed and reported by our radiologist. This can take up to two hours. For your convenience we can generally deliver the imaging and report to your doctor by the next working day. Alternatively your doctor may request that you wait or return later to collect the imaging and report.