Gastric Empty

Description

This nuclear medicine exam is done to see how long it takes your child's stomach to digest food. Nuclear medicine can track the food as it moves through the body. This exam is often done with the Gastroesophogeal reflux study.

If your child is able to eat solids, we will give your child a scrambled egg white and muffin sandwich. The egg white is mixed with a small amount of radioactive material (tracer) to allow us to follow the path of the meal with a special camera.

Infants will have the tracer mixed with their formula or expressed breast milk.

Children no longer taking formula or breast milk but not able to eat solids will have the tracer mixed with a processed food. (Baby food, soft cereals, yogurt, puddings)

We will take images with a special camera after the meal. It is important that your child remain still during these images. The timing of these images varies. We will be able to give you more information at the time of the exam.

Our pediatric radiologist will review the images; sometimes extra images or x-rays are needed before you leave the department.

Parents are allowed to be with your child in the exam room. If you have other children, please make plans for someone else to care for them.

Preparation

Medications

- Bring with you a complete list of your child's medications.

Eating before the exam

- Neonates: Nothing to eat 2 hours before exam
- 0-2 months: Nothing to eat 3 hours before exam
- 2-6 months: Nothing to eat 4 hours before exam
- 6 months and older: Nothing to eat 6 hours before exam

Other

- If your child is allergic to eggs or albumin (type of protein), tell your child's doctor so other arrangements can be made before the exam. (This applies only to children who are eating solid foods.)

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Nuclear Medicine
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- For all children not eating solid foods you must bring with you the meal.
- For infants, children with feeding tubes, bring 8 ounces of formula or expressed breast milk, pediasure, in a feeding bottle for use during the test.
- For toddlers not yet consuming solids, bring 8 ounces of processed or creamed food of your choice. (Babyfood, thickened formula, yogurt, pudding, soft cereal).

Patient Comfort

There is no pain or discomfort with the tracer or with the images.

Have your doctor's office call us if your child has pain while lying on their back, or other medical condition that will keep your child from holding still.

You can bring your child's favorite videos, music or books. This may help your child hold still and be more comfortable during the images. We have videos and books that your child can choose from if you do not wish to bring them from home.

Exam Time

The scan will take 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

After The Exam

Our pediatric radiologists will read the images and a report will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will go over this report with you.

Safety

The dose of radioactive material given is very small. This results in a low dose of radiation. In general, the benefit of having this exam is greater than the slight risk of exposure from the radiation. Talk to your doctor about risks and benefits of this scan.

For questions about the nuclear medicine procedure, call the Nuclear Medicine department at (616) 391-1769.

Scheduling questions, canceling of exam, and rescheduling, call (616) 391-1810 option 3

If you need to cancel your exam, call us at least 48 hours before the exam.