

# Care Gram

## Barium Swallow

### Welcome

Welcome to Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Radiology Department. Your doctor has requested a barium swallow test. This is a test of your esophagus (the tube that carries food, fluid, and saliva from your mouth to your stomach).

A radiologist (doctor with special training in diagnosis by X-ray) will perform the test.

### How the Test Works

This test studies how you swallow. You will be asked to swallow sodium bicarbonate granules and barium sulfate. The barium coats the walls of your esophagus.

### Allowing Time

The test usually takes less than 30 minutes, but you should allow at least one hour.

### Preparing for the Test

There is no special prep for this examination.

### Your Role

1. Follow the preparation as directed to prepare for the test.
2. Relax during the test. It is important to drink when asked.
3. If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, let your doctor know before the test begins.

### How to Register for the Test

Please report directly to the Registration area on the LMH First Floor. Bring with you a photo ID, insurance cards, and medication list. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to the start of your scheduled test.

### During the Test

- You will be asked to remove your clothing and wear a gown and robe. The radiographer will ask you a few questions.
- You will be standing with your back against the table. You will be asked to swallow sodium bicarbonate granules and a small amount of liquid. This will make your esophagus expand with gas. It is important not to belch and burp.
- You will then drink barium, which is a milky white liquid. The radiologist uses a fluoroscope (a device used to view structures inside the body) to watch the barium go into the digestive tract.



**Licking Memorial  
Health Systems**

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1616-1226  
01/22/2026  
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- The table will be placed in a flat position. You may be asked to drink more barium while lying down. You will be asked to turn from side to side and hold different positions.
- The radiologist will leave the room, then the radiographer may take a few more images and you will be asked to drink and swallow while the images are being taken.
- The radiographer will verify that all images are acceptable for review by the radiologist.

**After the Test**

The barium may make your stools appear white for 1 or 2 days. If you tend to get constipated, speak with your doctor. Drink plenty of fluids to help flush the barium out of your system. If you have limited fluids, please check with your doctor about how much to drink. You may eat a regular diet and resume medication after the test unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

**Finding Out the Results**

The radiologist will study your test and give the findings to your doctor. Your doctor will talk with you about the results.

**Reminder**

- If you have any questions about your test, please call (220) 564-4710.
- Report to the Registration area on the LMH First Floor 20 minutes before your test. Bring photo ID, insurance cards, and medication list.