

## ESOPHAGRAM

### ***Our Mission***

At Nicklaus Children's Hospital, it is our mission to inspire hope and promote lifelong health by providing the best care to every child. We focus on family-centered care in order to provide an optimal experience for patients and their families. We believe that parents and guardians play a vital role in the success of this test and want you to have an active role in your child's healthcare. The following information is to help prepare both you and your child for this scheduled exam.

### **What is an Esophagram?**

- An Esophagram is an X-ray done under fluoroscopy that takes pictures of the esophagus which connects the throat to the stomach, and carries food and drinks from the mouth to the stomach.
- An Esophagram shows how well the esophagus is working and is looking to see the direction in which the food travels as its being swallowed.
- The test does not hurt!
- Your child will be asked to lay down on the table while drinking a liquid called "Barium" which acts as a highlighter to show details of the esophagus and the direction the food goes when your child eats.
- Many children say that the Barium looks like a milkshake and enjoy when the technologists mix it with another flavor to help make it taste better.
- The test takes about 15-30 minutes to complete depending on how your child cooperates.
- *Take note that your child should not eat or drink anything before the exam.* A staff member will call you ahead of time to provide you with the proper instructions to follow for the day of the exam.

### **What to Expect the Day of the Exam**

#### **Step 1: Getting Ready**

- From the waiting room a staff member of the Radiology department will bring you to the X-ray room in the Fluoroscopy area of Radiology.
- In the room you will see a camera attached to a long table with a video screen behind it.
- Your child will be asked to change into a hospital gown and lay down on the table.

#### **Step 2: Taking Pictures**

- The technologist will then move the camera over top of your child's stomach. The camera never touches your child. *Reassure your child this does not hurt.*
- As the technologist takes pictures, your child will need to start drinking the Barium out of a cup with a straw.  
*Tip: Please feel free to bring in any fun, silly straws to help or distract your child while drinking the Barium liquid.*



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- If your child is younger, he/she may drink the Barium out of a sippy cup or bottle.
- Once your child is done drinking, the technologist takes a few more pictures before test is complete.

### **Step 3: Results**

- Results will be sent to your doctor usually within 48 hours.

### ***Child Life Specialists***

A part of the Child Life Specialist's role in the Radiology Department is to help children and families cope with the anxiety and fear associated with medical procedures. A Child Life Specialist may be available on the day of the exam to provide education and coping strategies. For more information, please contact Nicklaus Children's Hospital's Children's Experiences Department at 305-666-6511 extension 4875 and select #1.