

What you need to know about Small Bowel Follow-Through...

What is a Small Bowel Follow-Through?

The Small Bowel Follow-Through involves drinking a white fluid that is designed to make your small intestine visible on X-ray film. Sometimes the exam is scheduled along with an Upper GI Series. The procedure is most often used to diagnose problems with your digestive tract.

How does it work?

The white barium fluid allows the radiologist to see the contours of your small intestines with the use of X-rays.

May I take someone with me?

Certainly. Your friend or family member is welcome to stay in the waiting room.

How should I prepare for my exam?

The day before:

It is important that you do not eat or drink any dairy products the day before your exam. You should continue to take prescription medicines on schedule — unless your physician has instructed you differently.

Do not eat or drink after midnight on the day prior to your exam. On the day of your exam, do not eat or drink.

What about my clothing?

You will be asked to undress, put on a hospital gown, and remove any jewelry or any other objects that might interfere with the X-ray.

What will happen during the procedure?

You will be given two glasses of the contrast material (barium mixture) to drink. A technologist will take an X-ray every 15-20 minutes until the barium has passed into the large intestine. This time will vary from person to person. It could take less than an hour or, in some cases, more than two hours. Please keep in mind that the length of time it takes for you does not indicate a normal or abnormal exam.

When the barium has passed into your large intestine, the radiologist will check you briefly with a fluoroscope and television monitor.

Following the exam...

Your physician may direct you to drink eight glasses of water during the 24 hours following your exam to help you expel the remaining barium. A mild laxative may also be permitted.

When will I learn the results?

The radiologist will evaluate your case and report to your physician. Normally, within 3 working days, your physician will inform you of the results.

Whom should I call if I have any other questions?

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Northfield Hospital's Medical Imaging Department at (507) 646-1143.