

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

MEDICAL IMAGING REQUESTS FOR BARIUM STUDIES



Eastern
Health

Objective:

To develop guidelines for physicians that outline the appropriate ordering of barium studies performed in the Medical Imaging program. Please refer to these recommendations when requesting barium studies. If a request does not fall within the appropriate guidelines listed, it will be returned to the ordering physician.

UGI'S/Barium Swallow:

Clinical Indications	
Oropharyngeal dysphagia	Modified Barium swallow performed with cine-esophogram with speech pathology
Esophageal dysphagia normal OGD from endoscopist/ENT	Barium Swallow performed to evaluate for diverticulum, motility disorders (achalasia)
Upper esophageal dysphagia	Barium Swallow performed with referral from ENT to evaluate the cricopharyngeal area (spasm / malignancy)
Approved specific request from clinician	UGI performed to rule out anastomotic leak, pre-op assessment of hiatal hernia
Exclusions with preferred recommendations	
Esophageal dysphagia WITH alarm symptoms (age >50, weight loss, vomiting, bleeding, anemia, short duration)	Endoscopy
Esophageal dysphagia WITHOUT alarm symptoms:	Consider trial medical therapy first
Reflux, heartburn, hiatal hernia, GERD	Medical treatment, lifestyle changes

Small Bowel Follow-through:

Clinical Indications	
Approved specific request from clinician	Only performed to rule out fistula or leak
Exclusions with preferred recommendations	
Suspected intestinal blood loss (chronic or recurrent)	CT/MR Enterography
Suspected small bowel disease (Crohn's)	CT/MR Enterography

Large Bowel Imaging (Barium Enema):

Clinical Indications	
Approved specific request from clinician	Only to rule out fistula or leak
Exclusions with preferred recommendations	
Incomplete colonoscopy/ refusal of colonoscopy	CT Colonography
Chronic constipation	Colonoscopy

Note: CT of the Abdomen and Pelvis is recommended by radiology for assessment of abdominal pain suspected from a GI source not covered in the above categories.

