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What is a Modified Barium Swallow?

A modified barium swallow (MBS) is a radiologic imaging procedure that allows clinicians to evaluate and treat swallowing disorders. The procedure allows the speech-language pathologist (SLP) and radiologist conducting the evaluation to examine the inside of your mouth and throat as you swallow. Barium, which is not absorbed by the body and passes through the system harmlessly, is mixed with foods and liquids of varying consistencies. During the MBS, x-rays will be taken while you swallow these foods and liquids. Typical consistencies include thin and nectar-thick liquid barium, a thicker pudding-like consistency, and a cracker or cookie. The x-rays will provide information about whether your muscles are working correctly to provide you with a safe swallow.

Is there anything I should do to prepare for the MBS?

There is no need to fast or restrict your diet prior to the evaluation. It will be helpful for you to tell the SLP about different foods and liquids that commonly provide you with swallowing difficulties. If you are experiencing problems with a specific food, please bring a small portion of this food with you to the evaluation.

Is there any pain involved?

No. You will sit in a chair and be asked to eat or drink.

Are there any side effects?

Barium may turn your stools white for 24-72 hours after the test. Few patients have also complained of minimal constipation following the exam.

Where should I go?

The MBS is conducted in the Outpatient Radiology Department. Upon entering the main entrance of The University of Kansas Hospital, take the main elevators to the 2nd floor. Follow the signs to Outpatient Radiology. You will need to check in and fill out appropriate paperwork, so please arrive approximately 20 minutes before your scheduled exam. You DO NOT need to check in with the Department of Otolaryngology. Please report directly to Radiology.

What if I need to reschedule?

Please contact the Department of Otolaryngology appointment desk (913-588-6701) to cancel your appointment. You will also want to call Outpatient Radiology (913-588-6804) to let them know you will not be keeping your appointment. You will need to wait for a return phone call to receive a rescheduled appointment, as the procedure requires the availability of both Radiology and Speech-Language Pathology. Please be aware that this may take several business days. Feel free to contact us with any additional questions or concerns.

Patient Name _____

Appointment _____