Small Bowel Follow Through (SBFT)

What is a Small Bowel Follow Through?
Fluoroscopy is a special form of X-ray that produces real-time video images, as opposed to pictures on film, making it possible to see internal organs and joints in motion. A Small Bowel Follow Through (SBFT) is, as the name implies, a fluoroscopic exam that follows barium (a thick, chalky fluid), or some other contrast material, through the small intestine to assess function and appearance of the organ.

CPT Codes
74250 74245 (UGI with SB)

Indications
Diagnose conditions of the small bowel, including Crohn’s Disease, Ulcerative Colitis and bowel cancer.

Contraindications
Known or suspected perforation of the GI tract, bowel obstruction, severe constipation, pregnancy.

How Does Your Patient Prepare?
NPO, including smoking or chewing gum, after midnight, or for at least 8 hours prior to the exam.

What Happens During the Test?
The patient will be required to drink two types of barium. After drinking the barium, X-ray pictures will be taken of the abdomen at timed intervals. The length of time it takes to complete the exam depends on the time it takes for the barium to pass through the small intestine. This varies among people. Once the barium reaches the colon, the radiologist then takes live X-rays while pressing on the abdomen. The procedure typically takes two hours, but may take up to four or five hours.

After the Test
The patient may resume normal diet and activities following the exam. Barium may cause constipation or possible impaction after the procedure if it is not completely eliminated. The patient will be instructed to drink plenty of fluids and eats foods high in fiber to excrete the barium from the body. Bowel movements may be white or chalky in the short-term.

The Results
A radiologist will analyze the images and send a signed report to the referring physician within one business day.

(Information adapted from Wikipedia and Dr. Paul Keller)

This information is intended for use merely as a guideline for referring physicians and their staff members only. It contains information pertaining to the most commonly ordered exams and indications. However, Shawnee Mission Medical Center Radiology does not recommend any particular examination. Individual radiologist preference or patient circumstances may dictate ordering alternative studies. Although contrast codes are not needed to place an order, the following contrast codes may be used in placing orders: CT Contrast Q9967, MRI contrast A9577 and A9579.