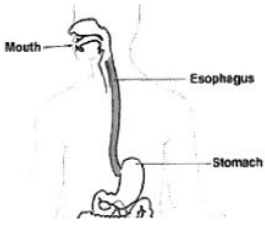# What is a pH Probe Study ?

What is pH a probe study?

Measuring the pH in the esophagus helps determine whether or not acid is coming up from the stomach.

A pH probe study is usually done in patients where gastroesophageal reflux (GER) is suspected. It is also used to find out how effective treatment is while receiving antacids. In other cases, the study might help explain nighttime cough, hoarseness or other complaints.

How is the test performed?

A thin plastic tube with a sensor at the tip is placed into one nostril and advanced into the esophagus. At the time of placement, this may cause your child to gag, sneeze or make their eyes tear.

A chest x-ray will confirm the position of the tip of the probe. A wire is connected to a portable recorder that your child can carry around for the duration of the study. The test lasts 18-24 hours.
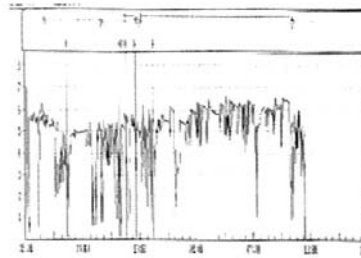
What is allowed during the test?

Your child should continue with usual activities. A diary of symptoms (crying, coughing, chest pain, refusing to eat) helps determine whether acidity in the esophagus is responsible for the child's complaints. Carbonated drinks should be avoided. The recorder should be disconnected if a bath or shower is taken.

What happens after the test?

After 18-24 hours, the tube is removed and the information stored in the recorder is analyzed.

A pH probe tracing looks like this:

Every downward turn of the curve reflects the presence of acid in the esophagus. A score can be calculated to help determine how abnormal the pH probe study is.

For more information or to locate a pediatric gastroenterologist in your area please visit our website at: www.naspghan.org

IMPORTANT REMINDER: This information from the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) is intended only to provide general information and not as a definitive basis for diagnosis or treatment in any particular case. It is very important that you consult your doctor about your specific condition.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:

NASPGHAN NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC GASTROENTEROLOGY, HEPATOLOGY AND NUTRITION

APGNN THE ASSOCIATION OF PEDIATRIC GASTROENTEROLOGY AND NUTRITION NURSES

NASPGHAN • PO Box 6 • Flourtown, PA 19031
215-233-0808 • Fax: 215-233-3939