

Videofluoroscopy

Speech and Language Therapy

Patient Information Leaflet



Introduction

This leaflet aims to help answer some of the questions you may have about having a videofluoroscopy to assess your swallowing. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives of the procedure as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff caring for you.

What is a videofluoroscopy?

A videofluoroscopy is a moving X-ray of your swallow which allows us to view the different stages of the swallow. It looks at how you chew or hold the food in your mouth and how well you manage to swallow food and drink. Sometimes, we look at how well the food or drink travels down your oesophagus (food pipe) into your stomach.

Why has this been recommended for me?

Your GP or hospital consultant may have suggested you have a more in-depth assessment of how you swallow. A speech and language therapist will have seen you to discuss any problems you may have with eating and drinking, and will have assessed your swallow. If the therapist needs to look at your swallowing in more detail, they will have suggested that you have a videofluoroscopy.

What are the benefits of having a videofluoroscopy?

It allows your speech and language therapist to see what happens when you swallow in more detail. We may then be able to recommend things you can do to improve your swallowing, such as:

- exercises
- different positions to eat or drink in
- different types of food or drink that will make swallowing safer or easier

What are the risks?

During the videofluoroscopy, there is a risk that some material may 'go down the wrong way'. This may make you cough. All care will be taken to minimise this risk and the amount of material that may potentially go down the wrong way.

The procedure uses a small amount of contrast which is a special liquid, called barium, that shows up on X-ray. Very occasionally, this can cause constipation, abdominal (stomach) pain or diarrhoea.

X-ray precautions:

- The procedure uses X-rays and these use a small amount of radiation which may add slightly to the normal risk of cancer.
- In radiology departments every effort is made to keep radiation doses low. The radiation doses from X-ray examinations or isotope scans are small in relation to those we receive from natural background radiation.

Female patients – you must tell us if you are or might be pregnant. If you are not sure, a pregnancy test will be offered.

Are there any alternatives?

There is no other assessment that offers this amount of detailed information about your swallowing to help your speech and language therapist to treat your symptoms.

Asking for your consent

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment so we will make sure you are happy to go ahead before undertaking the procedure.

How do I prepare for the videofluoroscopy?

You can continue your normal activities. If you are already eating and drinking, you can continue to do so. If you have a feeding tube, you can continue to use this.

What happens at the assessment?

You will need to come to the Radiology Department at the time stated on your appointment letter. You will be given a gown to wear over your clothes and you will be taken to the videofluoroscopy suite.

Who will be there?

There will be two speech and language therapists (possibly one that you have already met before) leading the assessment. A radiographer and possibly a radiologist will take the X-rays.

What will the assessment involve?

- You will be asked to stand or sit by the X-ray machine. During the test, we may ask you to move position, so that we can look at different views.
- We will give you things to eat and drink depending on what you are currently managing. This may include thin or thick fluids, blended, mashed, soft or whole foods such as yoghurt, mashed banana, soft, moist bread, biscuits.
- Everything you eat and drink will be mixed with or coated in liquid barium, to allow us to take X-rays.
- We may also ask you to try different head positions or swallowing techniques during the assessment. These will be clearly explained to you by the speech and language therapist at the time.

Sometimes some of the foods and drinks may 'go down the wrong way' and make you cough. This is nothing to worry about and may be part of the reason the assessment has been requested.

What is barium?

Barium (barium sulphate) is an X-ray contrast (white liquid). It is mixed with the food or drink so that it can clearly be seen on X-rays as it is being swallowed.

How long will it take?

The actual assessment will take approximately five minutes although you may be in the room for 10 to 20 minutes.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes. They can either wait outside the room or come into the room and stand behind the screen with one of the speech and language therapists.

When will I find out the results?

The speech and language therapist can show you part of the recording as soon as the assessment is finished, if you wish to see it. They will talk through any obvious findings and give you advice.

Remember, the aim of this assessment is to look at how you swallow, to work out what types of food or drink are best for you. It is **not** for the radiographer or speech and language therapist to diagnose any medical disorders.

After the assessment, the speech and language therapist will write a report. A copy will be sent to your GP and/or hospital consultant and any other health professional involved in your care, such as a dietitian. You can have a copy, if you wish.

Occasionally, once your hospital consultant sees the report, they may make further recommendations. This may include further investigation by the appropriate specialists such as ENT (ear, nose and throat) or gastroenterology doctors.

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Speech and Language Therapy Team on 01384 456111 ext. 4565 (8am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number:
01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/speech-and-language-therapy-community/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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