

Your doctor has recommended that you, or your relative, have a Videofluoroscopy. This leaflet will explain about the test.

What is Videofluoroscopy?

Videofluoroscopy is an examination used to look at how you swallow. It aims to find out what difficulties you are having. We do this by using an x-ray video. This gives us moving x-ray images that show us a picture of your head and neck whilst you are swallowing.



How will this help?

We use videofluoroscopy to understand and help with the problems that people can have when swallowing. We use this to see:

- Your chewing and swallowing in more detail with regard to movement and function.
- To see if food or drink 'goes down the wrong way' and enters your airway during swallowing.
- If some food and drink consistencies are easier and safer for you to swallow than others.
- If your swallowing difficulties can be helped by strategies e.g. changing the way you take your food or drink.
- The amount of food and drink that you can safely swallow with each mouthful and each mealtime.

What is involved?

During the examination you may be asked to swallow a range of foods and drinks of different consistencies. Each of these has an x-ray contrast, usually barium, added so that they show up on the images taken whilst you are swallowing. Usually these foods and drinks are:

- A barium drink
- A smooth yoghurt / pudding type consistency
- Banana either as puree or small lumps / pieces
- Cake
- Biscuit

You may also be trialled with a thickened drink if necessary.

If you have any food allergies or strong dislikes to certain foods, please discuss this with your Speech and Language Therapist before your appointment. You may be asked to bring an alternative food if this is the case.

How long does it take?

The process takes between 15 and 30 minutes. There may be some waiting time.

Is the test safe?

Although any test that involves using x-rays carries a small risk, the radiation dose is kept as low as possible. If there is any possibility that you could be pregnant, you must inform the Radiology staff before your test.

All staff within the x-ray room will be wearing personal protective equipment, this includes lead aprons for the radiation and aprons, masks and gloves in line with current Covid19 requirements.

How will this test help me?

Having a videofluoroscopy will help the team looking after you to find out the best way for you to swallow safely or more comfortably and the kinds of foods and drinks that you will be able to have. Having this test can help you make an informed decision about your eating and drinking.

Can I eat and drink before the test?

Yes, you can. However, you must follow any eating or drinking instructions that you have already been given.

Do I have to get undressed?

You will not need to get undressed or wear a hospital gown for this test. You will need to remove any jewellery on your head or neck and any tops that have metal around the neck area such as zips. If possible avoid wearing these items or remove them before you come into the room for the test.

How will I feel afterwards?

Most people have no side-effects from the test. There is a possibility that you may become a little constipated and your poo may look white or paler than usual because of the barium used to make the food or drinks show up on the images. The barium usually clears from your system within 48 hours.

After the test

The images are saved electronically within your hospital imaging records.

The hospital Speech and Language Therapist and the Specialist Radiographer will study the images made during the test and will produce a report which will be sent to your doctors and your Speech and Language Therapist. Your Speech and Language Therapist will discuss the findings with you either directly after the test or during a follow up visit or telephone call. The report may include recommendations regarding:

- Safer textures of foods and drinks to have
- Textures of foods and drinks to avoid because of the risk of choking or chest infections
- How to prepare foods and drinks differently
- How to hold your head or body in a different position whilst you eat and drink

Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have. They will be considered with your specific history in mind.

Where can I find more information?

If after reading this, you have more questions or are unsure about anything you have read, please call the Speech and Language Therapy Department on the number listed below, or alternatively speak to your Community Speech and Language Therapist.

Further help and advice:

NHS direct – Dysphagia (swallowing problems) www.nhs.uk/conditions/swallowing-problems-dysphagia

If you have any further questions please telephone East Coast Community Access on the number below:

01493 809977 during the hours of 09:00 and 16:30 Monday to Friday.

Your Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible - talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve it, then ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care.

Before leaving please complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.

Help us transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

OUR VALUES

- Collaboration** We work positively with others to achieve shared aims
- Accountability** We act with professionalism and integrity, delivering what we commit to, embedding learning when things do not go to plan
- Respect** We are anti-discriminatory, treating people fairly and creating a sense of belonging and pride
- Empowerment** We speak out when things don't feel right, we are innovative and make changes to support continuous improvement
- Support** We are compassionate, listen attentively and are kind to ourselves and each other



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240