

About your consent

Before we carry out any examination or treatment we will need your permission – this is known as consent. Before the examination starts we will explain what is involved and what we hope to gain from it. We will then ask for your consent to continue. For some procedures it may be necessary to sign a consent form, if this is the case we will discuss it with you.

If you change your mind about having the examination or treatment, you can withdraw your consent at any time no matter how you gave it. Everything discussed between you and the member of staff will remain confidential.

If you would like further information about consent or confidentiality, please read our information leaflet outlining consent.

Further Information

If you have any questions about your examination or need any further information please do not hesitate to contact us:

Clinical Imaging 01872 252338

Speech Therapy 01872 252470

If you need to change your appointment please contact the Clinical Imaging appointments clerks on 01872 252290.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690



Video swallow



What is a video swallow?

A video swallow is an X-ray examination that involves obtaining real time images of your swallowing mechanism and the organs involved, including your mouth, throat (pharynx) and upper food pipe (oesophagus). X-ray contrast (dye) is used to make your swallow and the organs involved show up on the X-ray images.

Why do I need it?

Your speech therapist and doctor have referred you for this examination, which is used to examine a range of problems, such as difficulty swallowing, coughing and choking when eating or repeated chest infections.

Are there any alternatives?

There are no alternatives to this examination.

How do I prepare for it?

There is no preparation needed for this examination. You can continue to eat and drink or have tube feed as you would normally.

You may wish to arrange for a carer or family member to attend the examination with you.

What does it involve?

You and your family member or carer will be taken into the X-ray room where you will meet the team of radiographers and speech therapists carrying out the examination. Your family member or carer will be seated so they are not exposed to radiation.

You will be asked to sit on a chair next to the X-ray machine, which will be positioned close to your shoulder. If you are a wheelchair user the examination can be performed with you seated in your wheelchair. If you are bed bound the examination can be performed on a special trolley.

Depending on your symptoms you will be asked to swallow liquid that contains barium or iodine in a range of thicknesses and food (eg banana, bread, biscuit) which has been coated in barium. If you have a gluten-free diet you may wish to bring gluten-free bread or biscuits. If you have any food allergies please inform the team. Real time X-ray images are taken while you are eating and drinking.

Will I have any pain or discomfort?

The examination should not be painful but it may cause you to experience some of your symptoms, such as food sticking or coughing.

Who will be involved?

Radiographers and speech therapists who specialise in swallowing problems will perform the examination and analyse the X-ray images.

How long does the examination take?

The examination will take around 30 minutes.

Are there any risks?

If you have an abnormal swallow a very small amount of liquid may enter your windpipe (airway). This may make you cough but will not harm you.

All X-ray procedures involve exposure to radiation in varying amounts, which may add very slightly to the risk of developing cancer. The length and level of exposure to radiation from X-rays in medical procedures is strictly controlled and kept to the minimum.

What happens afterwards?

The team will speak to you and your family member or carer to give you any necessary advice.

You should be able to leave the department as soon as the examination is finished.

When will I get my results?

The X-ray images will be analysed by the radiographer and speech therapists to determine if you have a swallowing problem, the cause of the problem, any therapies that may help and any further referrals that may be beneficial. The results will be sent to your GP and Speech therapist.