

# Patient information

## Videofluoroscopy

You have been given an appointment to attend the Videofluoroscopy Clinic run by the Speech and Language Therapy Department. This information sheet provides you with information about the clinic.

### Why have I been referred for Videofluoroscopy?

You have been referred for Videofluoroscopy because you have some difficulties with swallowing. Videofluoroscopy enables us to examine your swallowing in detail using an X-ray.

Speech and Language Therapists are trained to assess and treat swallowing problems. This examination will help us plan your therapy and give you useful feedback as to what is happening.

### What is Videofluoroscopy and what will happen during my appointment?

Videofluoroscopy is an examination used to find out what difficulties you are having with your swallowing. You will usually sit in a chair or stay in your wheelchair if necessary. You will eat and drink different consistencies of barium and we will take an X-ray video of your swallow.

We use this to see:

- If food or liquid is going down the wrong way (i.e. into the airway) without you realising it. This is called “silent aspiration”.
- If some food consistencies are easier for you to swallow than others.
- If your swallowing difficulties can be helped by altering the position of your head or body
- If your swallowing difficulties can be helped by specific strategies

The whole procedure normally takes about 30 minutes.

### Patient Choice - Do I need to bring anything with me to the Videofluoroscopy appointment?

Please bring with you any special cups or feeding utensils that you may use to help you with your eating and drinking. Remember to wear your dentures if you normally have these in when you eat and drink.

### Patient Choice - When will I know the results?

You will be given some basic feedback and advice immediately after the procedure.

Once the test is over, the Speech and Language Therapist leading the clinic will study the Videofluoroscopy images, compile a report and send a copy to your Speech and Language Therapist and your GP / Consultant.

In the report, they will suggest what you can do to make it easier for you to swallow. This may include:

- Avoiding certain foods
- Preparing foods and drinks differently
- Holding your head or body in a different position whilst you eat and drink or carrying out a specific strategy when you eat and drink.

A copy of the report will also be sent to you as a courtesy – if there are any terms or language you don't understand, please ask your Speech & Language Therapist to explain.

The video of your X-ray will form part of your patient record and be held within the hospital according to Department of Health guidelines.

### **Patient Choice- Is the procedure painful? Is the procedure safe?**

Any examination or test that involves using X-rays carries a small risk. However, the radiation dose for this examination is small and the radiology team keep the dosage as low as possible to ensure your health is not put at risk.

Most people have no side effects from this examination. There is a possibility that you will have some constipation and you may find that your faeces is white for a day or two. This is due to the barium we put in your food. The barium usually clears from your system within 24 hours. You may like to assist the clearing of the barium by eating a high fibre diet and drinking plenty of fluids, as long as this is within the recommendations made by the Speech and Language Therapist.

Although you will provide consent for this treatment, you may withdraw this consent at any time. Please discuss this with your Speech and Language therapist or Radiology staff.

The amount of food and drink you will be given is carefully controlled, however due to your swallowing difficulties there is a risk that some of the food/drink may go the 'wrong way' into your lungs.

### **Can I eat before this procedure?**

Yes you can eat and drink before this procedure unless you have been advised otherwise.

### **What happens afterwards?**

You can go home immediately after the appointment. If you are in hospital you will stay on the ward. It is likely that a further appointment will then be made with your own Speech and Language Therapist to explain the findings of the report and provide on-going support with your symptoms.

We would like to use your images to help train other professionals, including doctors. This will be done confidentially and your name will not be mentioned. If you would prefer us not to use your videofluoroscopy images, please let us know when you attend the clinic.

### **What if I have any questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions about the clinic or the procedure, call the Speech and Language Therapy Department on the number below.

### **Sources of information**

<https://www.esht.nhs.uk/service/speech-and-language-therapy/>

### **Speech and Language Therapy contact numbers:**

0300 131 4541

## Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

## Other formats

**If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.**

**Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

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## Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Anita Smith Consultant Speech and Language Therapist  
Cerian Brent, Clinical Lead Speech and Language Therapist

The Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet:  
Speech and Language Therapy Department

Next review date: January 2025

Responsible clinician/author: Anita Smith (Consultant Speech and Language Therapist)

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