

Your doctor or speech and language therapist has referred you for a videofluoroscopy in order to look at your swallowing difficulties in detail. This leaflet is designed to give you some information about the procedure and an idea of what to expect when you attend.

What is a videofluoroscopy?

A videofluoroscopy is a moving x-ray examination of swallowing. You will be asked to chew and swallow different varieties of food and drinks according to your identified difficulties and the images obtained will allow detailed analysis of your swallowing function.

What are the benefits?

The videofluoroscopy allows your speech and language therapist to see how you are currently managing with chewing and swallowing, whether any food or drink gets stuck in your mouth or throat or if it goes down the wrong way (aspiration). We may then be able to recommend things you can do to improve swallowing; such as exercises, different positions to eat or drink in, or 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 (aspiration). All care will be taken to minimise this risk and the amount of material that may potentially go down the wrong way. We will also take care to minimise the amount of x-ray radiation you are exposed to. The use of 'contrast' (a special liquid which shows up on x-ray) during the procedure is not usually associated with any problems but please let us know if you feel unwell during or after the examination.

If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant it is extremely important that you advise the radiographer or speech and language therapist before the test.

How do I prepare for this examination?

There is no preparation for this examination. If you are already able to eat and drink, you can continue to do so. If you are fed through a tube, this can continue as normal.

Please bring any special cups or feeding utensils that you may use to help you with your eating and drinking. If there are any specific foods that you find difficult and would like to try, then you can bring these. Remember to wear your dentures if you normally have these in when you eat and drink. Please also tell the speech and language therapist if you have any food allergies.

We may ask you to remove earrings, necklaces and zipped tops before the test as they can interfere with the x-ray image.

What happens during a videofluoroscopy?

The videofluoroscopy team comprises two specialist speech and language therapists and a radiographer. A consultant radiologist may also be present if required by the referring team. The assessment takes about 20 minutes.

You will be asked to sit or stand by the x-ray machine. One part of the machine may move around by your head and neck when you swallow to achieve the best view.

The speech and language therapist will ask you to take small amounts of drink and food as appropriate. The food or drink is mixed with "contrast" which shows up on x-ray.

The speech and language therapist will assess the effectiveness and safety of your swallow.

You may be asked to try a different position or strategy to make your swallow safer or more efficient. You should not experience any pain.

Each swallow is recorded so that it can be reviewed later to help develop your treatment plan.

What happens after the procedure?

You can return to the ward or go home immediately after the appointment. The speech and language therapist will be able to give you some basic information and advice immediately after the procedure. It is likely that a further appointment will then be made with your own speech and language therapist to discuss the results in more detail and provide further advice.

Where to find us

The entrance to the x-ray department (location 38 – Radiology) is situated underneath the clock tower. Please bring change for the pay and display visitor car park.

Contact details

Should you have any concerns or further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Speech and Language Therapy Department
Tel: 01342 414471

Radiology Department
Tel: 01342 414249

If you'd like to find out how you can support QVH, please visit www.supportqvh.org



Please ask if you would like this leaflet in larger print or a different format.

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Having a videofluoroscopy (VFS) to assess your swallowing

Speech and Language Therapy

