

Speech and Language Therapy Department Videofluoroscopy Information Leaflet

Why have I been referred for a videofluoroscopy?

You have been referred for a videofluoroscopy by your Speech and Language Therapist. This is because you have a swallowing problem, which needs further investigation.

The videofluoroscopy is a moving X-ray which enables the Speech and Language Therapist to examine your swallowing in detail. Different food and drinks are trialled and /or different techniques to help you swallow more effectively.

What happens during the videofluoroscopy?

The procedure is conducted by a Speech and Language Therapist and either a Radiologist or specialist Radiographer. The procedure will probably last 15-25 minutes.

You will be seated throughout the procedure, either in a special chair that is height adjustable or in your own wheelchair. Occasionally if you are unable to sit in a chair the procedure can be carried out on a stretcher bed. You will not have to change out of your clothes but you may be asked to remove any earrings or necklaces.

The Speech and Language Therapist will give you different consistencies to eat and drink which have been mixed with barium. Barium is used to make the food and liquid show up on the X-ray. The X-ray will take pictures while you swallow to enable the Speech and Language Therapist and Radiographer to see what happens in your mouth and throat. The procedure is also recorded so that it can be reviewed and analysed at a later time.

We will assess your swallowing with a range of food and drink, including yogurt, banana and biscuit. **If you have any allergies to these foods, please let us know before you attend the appointment.**

Is the procedure painful? Is the procedure safe?

The assessment is completely painless as it is a non-invasive procedure. There are minimal risks associated with this procedure as the amount of food you will be given to eat and drink is carefully controlled. However due to your swallowing difficulties there is a risk that some of the food/drink containing barium may go the 'wrong way' into your lungs. On rare occasions this is a significant risk and therefore appropriate medical attention will be arranged.

The amount of radiation that you receive is carefully controlled. **However female patients must let staff know if they are/might be pregnant.**

Can my relative/carer/friend accompany me to the procedure?

You are more than welcome to bring someone along to the procedure with you. They are welcome to observe the procedure being carried out but will be asked to stand behind a glass screen to protect them from the X-rays.

Can I eat before the procedure?

Unless you have been advised otherwise, you can eat and drink as normal before your appointment. If you are currently receiving your food/drink via a feeding tube you can take your feeds as normal up until your appointment. Your tube does not need to be removed for the procedure.

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. If there are specific foods that you find difficult and you would like to try, you can bring these with you. Remember to wear your dentures if you normally have these in when you eat and drink.

What happens afterwards?

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.

Students/teaching

The Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital is a teaching hospital and medical or therapy students may observe whilst you are being treated. If you would prefer not to have a student present, please inform your therapist when you attend the hospital. This will not affect your treatment in any way.

We may also use the recording of the X-ray for teaching purposes, however it will not be possible to identify you from the recording.

Points of contact

If you have any questions about the procedure you can either speak to your ward or community therapist, the staff when you attend for your videofluoroscopy appointment, or you can call the Speech and Language Therapy department at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital **(01603 287117)**