

# Having a video swallow

Information for patients



## **What is a video swallow?**

A video swallow is an x-ray examination of the mouth and throat to assess swallowing problems. The speech and language therapist will give you small amounts of liquid, and different consistencies of food mixed with barium, a chalky powder which shows up on x-ray. X-rays will be taken whilst you eat or drink.

## **Who performs the test?**

A specialist radiographer and a speech and language therapist will perform the procedure together.

## **How do I prepare for the test?**

Do not stop taking vital medicines (heart drugs, steroids, diuretics / water tablets etc.) There is no preparation for this test. You may eat and drink as is normal for you.

## **What should I bring with me?**

You may be required to change into a gown for this examination. We will provide you with a gown. Please do not bring large sums of money or items of value with you.

Unfortunately we are not able to provide any childcare, so please make alternative arrangements if necessary.

## How long will I be in the department?

Allow up to an hour for your examination. Although we try to keep to your appointment time, occasionally there may be a delay due to emergency patients.

## Are there any side-effects?

### *Radiation*

This procedure involves x-rays. Female patients who are, or might be pregnant **must** inform a member of staff in advance.

The amount of radiation used is more than an ordinary x-ray of the chest or body and is equal to the natural radiation we receive from the atmosphere over a period of approximately two years. The risk from this radiation dose is very low.

### *Allergic reaction*

Some patients may be allergic to the x-ray dye or medicines we give you. This is very rare. If you have any allergies please tell the member of staff who is performing your examination, at the start of the examination.

### *Aspiration*

Sometimes when we swallow some of what we swallow goes into our lungs. If this happens to you in daily life then it may also happen when you swallow the x-ray dye. If a lot of the x-ray dye does go into your lungs we will make sure you cough most of it up before you leave the department. The risk of becoming unwell because of this is very small.

## Do you ever fail to complete the examination?

This is a safe examination that is usually successful. If, for any reason, we are unable to perform the examination we will inform your doctor who will discuss the alternatives with you.

Despite these small risks your doctor believes it is beneficial for you to have this examination. Do bear in mind that there are greater risks from missing a serious disorder by not having the examination.

## How will I feel following the test?

You will be able to resume normal activities immediately. The speech and language therapist will advise you on how to eat and drink following the examination.

## How do I get my results?

The speech and language therapist may be able to discuss the results before you leave the department. The results will also be sent to the speech and language therapist who referred you for the test and they will arrange to meet with you at a later date to discuss the results in detail.