

A written report of the videofluoroscopy will be sent to your GP and the person who referred you for the procedure. You may need to see them again following the videofluoroscopy to discuss any changes to your management.

## Reference source

- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Videofluoroscopic evaluation of oropharyngeal swallowing function (VFS): the role of speech and language therapists. RCSLT position paper 2013

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For an easy read version, see  
[www.easyhealth.org.uk](http://www.easyhealth.org.uk)  
(Health Leaflets: X-Rays and scans)

## Contact details

### For further information please contact:

- Speech and Language Therapy Department  
Tel. No. 01483 408376
- X-Ray Appointments:  
Tel. No.: 01483 571122 – Ext. 6646

Royal Surrey County Hospital (RSCH) NHS Foundation Trust fully subscribes to the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) *Being Open* best practice framework, November 2010.

## PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located in far left corner as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–4.00pm  
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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## Videofluoroscopy (Modified Barium swallow)



## Speech & Language Therapy

## What is a videofluoroscopy?

Videofluoroscopy is an assessment of your swallow using X-rays. It is used to look at the patterns of movement during swallowing. It also shows which types of food or drink are the easiest or safest for you to have.

## Why do you need a videofluoroscopy?

You may have been assessed by a Doctor or Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) who feels that your swallow has either changed or that some foods/drinks are becoming more difficult to swallow. A videofluoroscopy can show:

- difficulties with chewing or moving food around in your mouth
- food or drink getting 'stuck' in your mouth or throat
- food or drink 'going down the wrong way' into your lungs (aspiration)
- any exercises or techniques which may make your swallow safer/easier
- if it is safe to increase the amount or type of food/drink that you are already having

The procedure will identify your specific difficulty with swallowing which will allow us to make an individual management plan.

## What happens during a videofluoroscopy?

Before the procedure, a SALT will ask you about your eating and drinking. They may also ask to look inside your mouth or watch you swallow your saliva.

You will be given a hospital gown to wear over your own clothes to protect them from any spillage (of barium) during the assessment.

You will need to stand or sit in front of the X-ray machine. A chair can be provided if you have difficulties standing or you can use your own wheelchair if you prefer. The SALT will give you a variety of things to swallow including:

- liquid barium
- thickened liquid barium
- mousse containing barium
- biscuit dipped or coated in barium

The person taking the X-rays (Radiographer) will tell you when to swallow and may help to reposition you to take X-rays from different angles.

## Is the procedure safe?

The assessment uses X-rays and barium which are controlled by stringent regulations. The amounts of barium given during a videofluoroscopy are very small and suction equipment is available if you are unable to swallow at any time.

The amount of radiation received during a Videofluoroscopy is equal to about 2-3 weeks of 'background' radiation (which we are all naturally exposed to in the environment). The benefits of having a Videofluoroscopy, therefore, far outweigh the risks.

If you do not want to have the procedure, you should inform your Doctor as soon as possible to discuss your decision and consider any other alternatives.

You may be given an Iodine based barium drink if there is a known risk of you choking with fluids. If you are allergic to Iodine, please let us know.

You should contact the X-ray department if you think you may be pregnant as your appointment may need to be changed or cancelled.

## Are there any side effects?

Barium can be constipating so you may need to have extra drinks, fruit or vegetables for a few days after the procedure (unless advised otherwise by your SALT). Your motions (faeces) may be pale or white and difficult to flush until all the barium has been passed.

## What happens afterwards?

The SALT will offer to show you your X-rays to explain the findings. You may wish to have a relative or friend with you – particularly if they help to prepare your meals or drinks or if you have difficulty remembering information.