

Paediatric Barium Swallow

Radiology Department



Patient information leaflet

This is a procedure using x-rays to look at the throat, oesophagus (gullet) and stomach.

This leaflet provides you with information about having a barium swallow. It explains what is involved and who you will meet.

What preparation is required?

We need your child to be hungry or thirsty for this examination, so that the stomach is empty and he or she will want to drink the x-ray dye.

If your child is diabetic please ring the department on the contact number listed later in the leaflet so that more appropriate arrangements can be made.

- **Babies:** Try and time the next feed with the appointment time. Please bring a clean bottle with you and a feed for after the examination.
- **Toddlers and older children:** nothing to eat or drink for one hour before the examination. If your toddler uses a special drinking cup please bring an empty one with you. Although the dye is quite palatable, if your child has a favourite drink eg; apple juice you can bring some to mix with the dye.
- **Older children:** if their clothing is light and contains no metal adornments such as sequins or zips, they may not have to get changed for the examination.

Women of child bearing age

If the mother or guardian of the child is, or thinks they may be pregnant, she will not be able to stay at the child's side during the procedure. She will be able to stay in the x-ray room but remain behind a lead glass screen. If this is the case, please arrange for another close relative or friend to also accompany the child during the examination.

The Radiology Department

Radiology is also known as the X-Ray or Imaging Department.

Who will I meet?

Receptionist/Clerical Staff: can help you make or change your imaging appointments and ensure your details are correct when you arrive for your appointment.

- **Radiographers:** a health care professional who will assist the radiologist.
- **Radiologist:** a specialist doctor trained to take images during the examination. They will also interpret the images and report them for your consultant.

What happens when I arrive?

Please register at the reception desk, where you will be directed to the waiting area.

What will happen during the examination?

In order for the doctor to visualise the throat and stomach successfully, your child will need to drink a liquid called barium sulphate. The barium is of a milkshake consistency and has a sweet flavour.

We will begin with your child lying on their left side as the stomach fills with the barium drink. We will then help you to move them onto their back and their right side whilst we take low dose pictures as the dye flows through.

Older children usually stand up for the swallowing pictures and may not need to lie down at all.

The examination usually takes approximately 10 minutes.

Are there any risks or side effects to the examination?

The examination is very safe. The barium is not absorbed into the body and therefore, it is rare to cause any adverse reactions. It may, however, cause some problems with constipation so please follow the after care instructions.

There is a slight risk that the barium may go down the “wrong way” and go into the airway. This can usually be cleared by coughing or if necessary by some physiotherapy. Please make us aware if you have previously noticed food/liquid going down the “wrong way”.

As with all x-ray examinations, we endeavour to keep the exposure to radiation to the absolute minimum. Your referring clinician has decided the risks from missing a serious disorder by not having this investigation outweighs the risk from the amount of radiation dose your child will receive.

Is there an alternative examination?

We do not offer an alternative examination at this hospital.

Aftercare advice

Your child may return home, or to school following the examination and eat normally. You need to be aware that barium can temporarily alter the bowel habit, and may cause constipation. We recommend that your child drinks more fluids than normal to reduce the risk of constipation.

When will I get the results?

The x-rays will be reported after your visit and the results sent to your referring doctor, normally within 14 days. If you already have a clinic appointment you will receive the results then, otherwise you will receive a letter either with the results or with a clinic appointment. If you were referred by your GP please make an appointment after the two week period.

Privacy and dignity

We will try to make your visit to our department as comfortable as we can.

Patient survey

We value your opinion about the service we provide. Please help us to improve the service by answering the voluntary questionnaire found with your appointment letter.

Reference sources

- Royal College of Radiologists
- Chapman & Nakielnys guide to radiological procedures

Useful websites

- The royal college of radiologists

Information on radiation

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-dose-comparisons/ionising-radiation-dose-comparisons

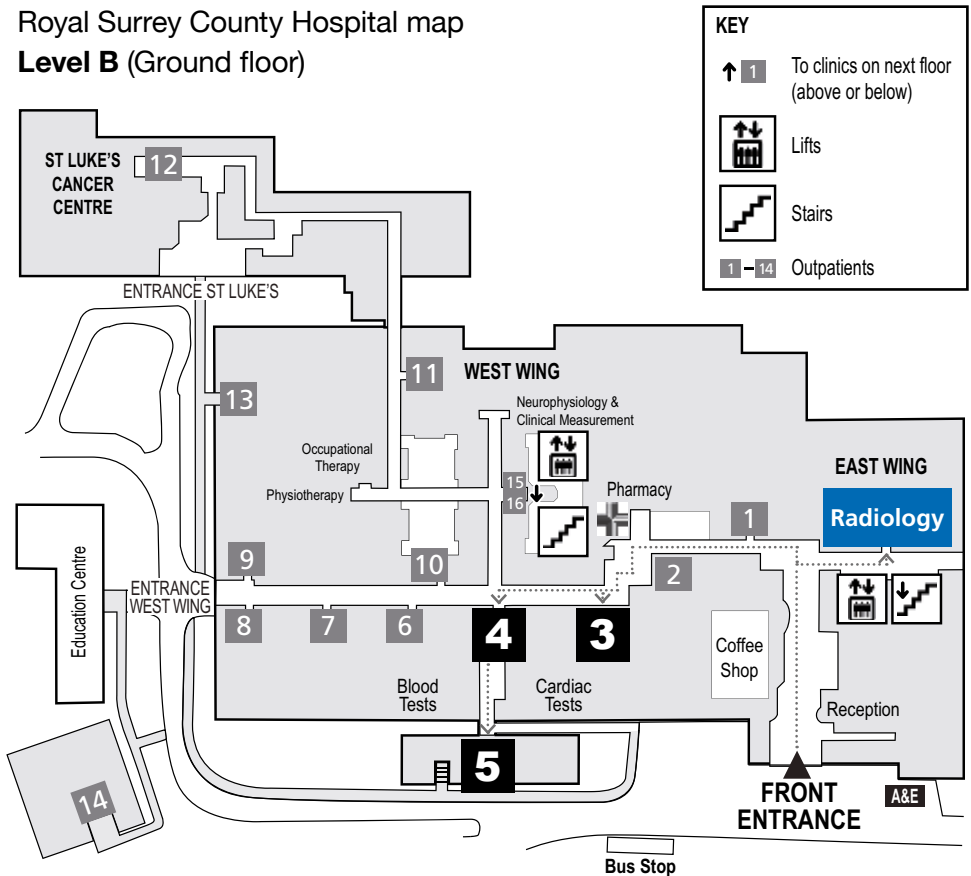
For general information about radiology departments visit:

- The Royal College of Radiologists' website: www.goingfora.com
- NICE guidelines www.nice.org.uk

How to find the Radiology Department

Royal Surrey County Hospital map

Level B (Ground floor)



Data sharing reference information is available on Royal Surrey County Hospital patient information leaflet entitled:

Your Healthcare records – your information, PIN120703–562

Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Egerton Road

Guildford

Surrey

GU2 7XX

www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk

Radiology Department contact details

If you have any questions or would like to know more about this examination, please contact the Radiology Department on:

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 2050 or 01483 464150

Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm

If you are unable to keep your appointment, please contact us as soon as possible.

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 on the right hand side 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

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, 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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Author: Libby Main

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