

Radiology Department  
John Radcliffe Hospital and Churchill Hospital

# Video swallow examination

Information for patients



## Video swallow examination

The radiology department has received a request for you to have a video swallow examination. This leaflet has been written to tell you why you need the examination, what is involved and what the risks are. We will also send you an appointment letter, which will tell you where to come to for your appointment.

If you cannot come for your appointment, please let us know **as soon as possible**. Please telephone us on:

**01865 228 944**

(9.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)

If you weigh more than 146kg or 23 stone, please tell us immediately, as we may need to make adjustments to the equipment we use.

**If you need hospital transport to reach the hospital, please tell us as soon as possible.**

## What is a video swallow examination?

This is an examination that looks at your swallowing function using a special X-ray fluoroscopy machine, that can record a video of your X-ray images. You will be asked to swallow various consistencies and textures of an iodine-based liquid called contrast, and then possibly a contrast containing barium sulphate, which shows up on the X-ray images.

## Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, but for reasons of safety they will not be able to accompany you into the X-ray room, except in very special circumstances.

## Are there any risks?

**Exposure to radiation:** X-rays use radiation to create the image on the screen. This is a low dose examination, which means the amount of radiation is kept to a minimum. It is equivalent to the amount of background radiation that you naturally receive in your everyday environment over 3-4 months.

There is a chance that a little bit of the liquid used during the test might go down the wrong way, into your airway. If this happens, we may need to organise some physiotherapy to help you cough it back up.

## How do I prepare for the examination?

You can continue to take any medication as you would normally.

You can also eat and drink as usual.

## What happens during the examination?

The procedure usually lasts about 20 minutes, but as the X-ray equipment is also used for other departments you may be at the hospital longer if we need to see emergency patients.

You are not likely to need to change into a hospital gown; however we will need to make sure no metal objects are seen on the pictures, such as earrings, necklaces or bra straps. You will need to remove these before you come for the X-ray.

There will be a specially trained radiographer and a speech and language therapist carrying out your examination. You will be sitting down during the test and will be asked to swallow several different consistencies containing X-ray dye (contrast). This will allow us to see your swallowing on the X-ray images.

If you are a wheelchair user and are unable to transfer into our chair we may be able to carry out the test in your own chair, if it is suitable. Please phone us before your appointment on the number below if you are unable to transfer into a different chair.

Tel: **01865 228 944**

(9.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)

We will need to ask about the height of your chair, so that we can make arrangements to use the most appropriate equipment.

## Are there any side effects?

There should be no side effects from the examination.

## What happens after the examination?

You can leave the department when you are ready. You can eat and drink, and continue to take your medication as usual.

## When and how will I know the result of the examination?

Your swallowing images will be examined by the radiographer, speech therapist and a radiologist, who will then send a report of the results to the person who referred you.

- If your GP referred you, the report will be sent to them. You can make an appointment to see them 10 days after your video swallow.
- If a doctor/consultant from the outpatient department referred you, then the result will be sent to them in time for your next outpatient appointment. If you do not yet have another outpatient appointment and do not hear anything within 3 weeks, please telephone your consultant's secretary for advice.

## Questions or concerns

If you have any questions please telephone the radiology department:

Tel: **01865 228 944**

(9.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)

For urgent matters after 5.00pm or at the weekend:

Tel: **01865 220 215**

## Further information

Further information can be found on the following website:

**NHS Choices**

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Dysphagia/Pages/Diagnosis.aspx>



If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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