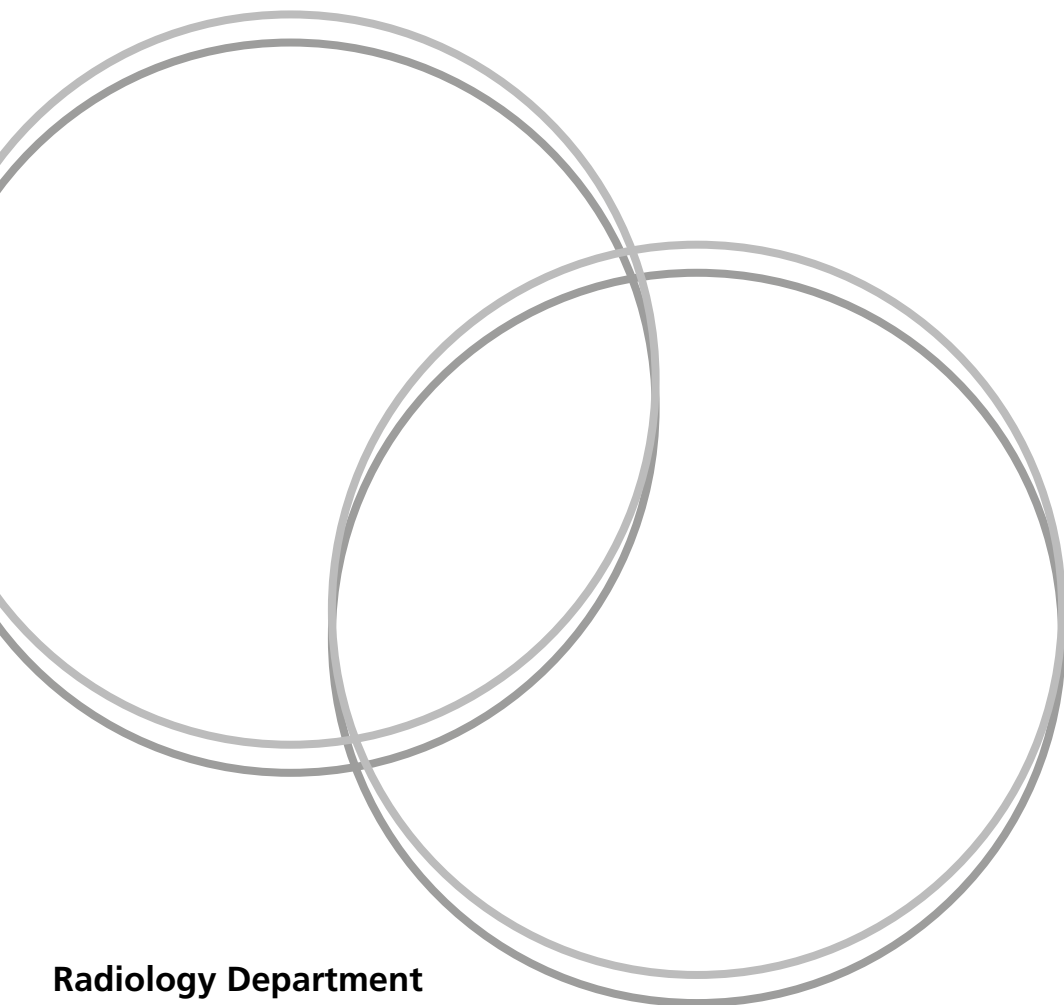




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Videofluoroscopy examination

**Information for patients**



**Radiology Department**

## Videofluoroscopy examination

You have been referred to have a videofluoroscopy. This is an examination of your swallowing function. This leaflet has been written to tell you why you need the examination, what is involved and what the risks are.

You will also receive an appointment letter, which will tell you when and where to attend for your appointment.

Please let us know if:

- you cannot attend
- if you weigh more than 196kg or 31 stone, as we may need to adjust the equipment we use
- **if you need hospital transport to reach the hospital. You will need to arrange this with your GP prior to the appointment.**
- you have an allergy to iodine
- you are pregnant or think that you may be pregnant

You can contact us on: **01865 228944**

(9.30a.m. to 4.30 p.m., Monday to Friday)

Contact details are also on the front of your appointment letter.

## What is a Videofluoroscopy?

This is an examination of your swallowing function using an X-ray fluoroscopy machine, which provides a moving image of your swallowing in real time. The examination will determine if you have a swallowing difficulty, and whether your swallowing difficulty is due to a problem with your mouth/throat (oro-pharyngeal dysphagia), your food pipe (oesophageal dysphagia), or potentially both.

## 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 special circumstances. If the hospital has a different visitor policy in place at the time of your appointment, this will be communicated to you.

## Are there any risks?

- **Exposure to radiation:** This is a low dose examination, and the amount of radiation is kept to a minimum. This is equivalent to the amount of background radiation that you naturally receive over 3-4 months
- **Aspiration:** There is a risk that you may aspirate during the study. This is when liquid or food that you are swallowing goes down into your airway. If this happens, we may need to organise for you to be seen by a physiotherapist to help you clear it. The need for this will be assessed by the practitioners during the examination and, if felt onwards referral is required, further information will be provided.
- **Allergy:** There is a slight risk from an allergy to contrast dye, however this is uncommon. Medicines to help with any reaction are always kept on site, with doctors available for assessment if needed. Your doctor has recommended this examination because they feel that the benefits are greater than the risk of not having the examination.

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

Please try to avoid wearing earrings or necklaces to your appointment. You may wear glasses or hearing aids if you require these. You can continue to take any medication you usually take, and you can eat and drink beforehand and afterwards.

## **What happens during the examination?**

We will let you know when you arrive if the clinic is running late. As the X-ray equipment is also used for other procedures, on rare occasions we may need to delay your appointment to see emergency cases, but this will also be communicated to you.

You can wear your own clothes during the procedure, but we will need to make sure that no metal objects are seen on the images i.e.: zips or buttons. We can provide you with a plastic apron to protect your clothing from any spillages.

The procedure itself usually lasts between 20-30 minutes. There will be a specially trained radiographer and speech and language therapist carrying out your examination. You may be seated during the test. The speech and language therapist will ask you to swallow various consistencies and textures of food/drink, together with an iodine-based liquid called contrast and/or a contrast containing barium sulphate, which will show up on the images. You may be advised to swallow in different positions.

## **Are there side effects, and what happens after the examination?**

- There should be no side effects from the examination. Barium liquid can sometimes cause constipation, but you will only be given a very small amount of this. Drinking an extra cup or two of liquid over the next two days will help.

## **What happens after the examination?**

You can leave the department after the examination. 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 speech and language therapist and specialist radiographer. A report will be sent to the person who referred you for the examination.

Recommendations about your swallowing will be made, and the findings will then be discussed with you by your treating speech and language therapist and/or the professional who referred you for the videofluoroscopy.

If your GP referred you, the report will be sent to them. You can make an appointment to see them 10 days after your videofluoroscopy.

If a consultant referred you, then the result will be sent to them in time for your next outpatient appointment. If you do not have an outpatient appointment scheduled and do not hear anything within 3 weeks, please telephone your consultant's secretary for advice.

## **Questions or concerns**

If you have any questions, you can telephone us on the number on the front of your appointment letter.

## **Further information**

Further information can be found on the following websites:

### **NHS Choices**

**[www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Dysphagia/Pages/Diagnosis.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Dysphagia/Pages/Diagnosis.aspx)**

**If you are unable to keep your appointment, please help us by contacting the Radiology appointments team as soon as possible. Your appointment slot can then be given to someone else, and you will be offered an alternative date and time.**



## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)



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