



Imaging



**Brighton and Sussex
University Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Your fluoroscopy swallow

Information for patients

What is a fluoroscopy, or barium swallow?

This is an x-ray examination that looks at your oesophagus, (the tube that leads to your stomach). We will ask you to drink a chalky white liquid called barium, which shows up on the x-rays. We take x-ray pictures as you swallow the barium.

The purpose of the test is to try and find out what may be causing your symptoms, (for example, difficulty swallowing).

If we are also asked to look at your stomach we will give you a teaspoon of powder to swallow called Carbex which makes gas in your stomach and will help us to see it better. The Carbex may make you want to burp for a short time.

The examination will be carried out by a team of staff which may include a radiologist, a radiographer and a health care assistant.

Preparing for your barium swallow

Your stomach must be completely empty for the procedure so please have nothing to eat or drink for 2 hours before your appointment time. If you are due to take tablets or medicine, please bring these with you and they can be taken after the procedure.

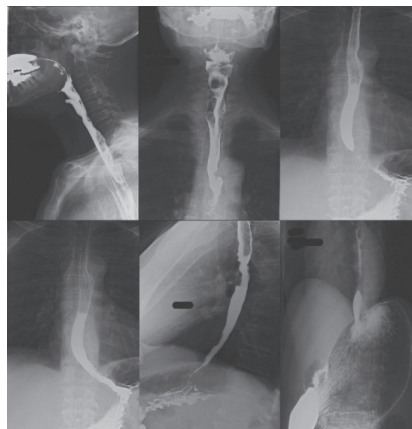
Ladies between 11-65 years old will be asked if there is any chance of pregnancy to make sure that we do not x-ray someone who is pregnant.

What will happen during the examination?

When you arrive you will be taken to a cubicle and asked to change into a hospital gown. Please feel free to bring your own dressing gown too if you wish. In the x-ray room you will be asked to stand in front of

the x-ray camera and you will be given the barium drink. Pictures are taken as you drink the liquid. X-ray images may be taken at different angles to show the oesophagus and stomach.

The procedure will take between 15 and 30 minutes.



What happens afterwards?

As soon as the procedure is finished you are free to eat and drink as normal.

The results of your procedure will be sent to the referring doctor. You will not be given results on the day of the examination.

Barium may make you constipated: to avoid this we advise that you drink plenty of fluids after the test. Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables also helps to get rid of the barium. The barium will make your stools (poo) pale or white for a day or two.

The barium does not get absorbed into the body so it is rare for this test to cause any other side effects.

What are the risks and benefits?

Exposure to radiation: This is a low dose examination and the amount of radiation is kept to a minimum. It is the same as the amount of natural background radiation that you would naturally receive in 4 months. Very rarely a little bit of the barium may go down the wrong way, into the airway. Sometimes we may need to organise some physiotherapy to help you cough this back up.

Are there any alternatives?

If you are unable to tolerate this procedure your referring doctor will be informed and they will decide if an alternative examination is appropriate for you.

Who do I contact for more information?

If you have further questions please feel free to ask on the day of your examination or speak to your referring doctor.

If you have vision, mobility or access issues, or have any questions, please contact the Imaging Department on **01273 664575**.

Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm.

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Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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