

# Having an X-ray exam to assess your swallowing (videofluoroscopy)

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: May 2023

Next review: May 2026

Leaflet number: 32 Version: 7

## Introduction

If you are an outpatient please read your appointment letter carefully to check which hospital your appointment is at. This leaflet tells you about your examination. Please read it carefully as it has important information and instructions.

## Important information

- **If there is any chance you may be pregnant**, please contact the Radiology Department straight away.
- **If you need an interpreter** please contact the Radiology Department for more information.
- **You should take your medicines as usual** unless told otherwise by your doctor.

## What is a videofluoroscopy examination?

Videofluoroscopy (pronounced vid-ee-oh-floor-oss-cop-ee) is a video made from lots of small X-ray pictures. This X-ray test shows what happens when you swallow liquid or solid food.

Your doctor will have taken into account your symptoms and decided that this is the most appropriate examination for your particular problem.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## How do I get ready for the examination?

You do not need to do anything special to get ready for this examination.

You can eat and drink as usual on the day.

If you are on medication from your doctor please continue to take it as usual.

## What happens during the examination?

- When you arrive at the Radiology Department you will be shown to the waiting area.
- You may be shown to a cubicle to take off some of your clothes and put on a hospital gown.
- You will be taken into the X-ray room where the examination will be explained to you. You can ask any questions that you have.
- You will then be asked to stand or sit against the X-ray machine.
- You will be given small amounts of a contrast liquid to swallow. The contrast liquid shows up on X-rays. The liquid may be either Gastromiro or Barium. Gastromiro is a clear, colourless liquid. Barium is a white chalky liquid. The mixture may be made up to different thicknesses depending on the difficulties you have swallowing.
- You will be asked to move into different positions so that different X-ray pictures can be taken while you are swallowing the Gastromiro or Barium liquid.

## Important information

The contrast liquid has iodine in it.

### Please tell the X-ray staff when you arrive if:

- **You are allergic to iodine or rubber (latex)**, have any other allergies or have asthma.
- **You have had a reaction in the past to contrast liquid injected into a vein (intravenous contrast)**, the dye used for kidney X-rays, CT scanning and X-rays of your heart and blood vessels.

## Who will be doing the examination?

- A member of staff from the radiology department and a Speech and Language Therapist will carry out the examination.
- During the examination there will be a radiographer and sometimes a nurse or assistant in the room.
- As we are a teaching hospital a student may also be present. If you wish you can ask that the student is not present during your examination.

## How long will it take?

A videofluoroscopy examination usually takes between 20 and 30 minutes. The time will vary slightly for each patient.

## What happens afterwards?

If you are an outpatient you can go home after the examination. You will be told what you may eat or drink.

If you are staying in hospital as an inpatient (overnight stay) you will be taken back to your ward. You will be told what you may eat or drink.

If you were given barium to drink it will go through your tummy (bowel) within a few days. This means your poo may look white or pale for a few days.

## How do I get the results?

Your X-ray images will be looked at by a doctor who specialises in X-ray test (a radiologist) and/or a Speech and Language Therapist.

We may be able to give you some information about your results straight away but you may also have to see your doctor or consultant for more details at a later date. This will be explained after your examination.

If you are an inpatient when you come for the test the results will be given to the doctors looking after you on the ward.

## What are the risks from exposure to radiation in this test?

The main risk from exposure to X-rays is an increase in the risk of getting a cancer in the future. This risk is thought to be very small. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, food we eat, and the ground. Each examination that uses X-rays gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation.

The benefits of this examination are likely to outweigh any potential risk and the risk from not having the examination could be greater. We will take all safeguards to minimise the amount of X-rays you are exposed to during your examination.

## What if I need to talk to someone?

If you have any queries about the examination, you can call the Speech and Language Therapy Team at Leicester Royal Infirmary on Tel: **0116 258 5363**.



If you have any other questions or concerns, or cannot make your appointment, please call the Radiology Department on **0116 258 8765 (option 7)**, Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm, excluding bank holidays.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)