

### Other information

**Cancellations:** Please contact the Department of Speech and Language Therapy giving at least 48 hours' notice (where possible) of a cancelled appointment.

If you are unwell on the day of the appointment please ring the department as soon as possible as the appointment may need to be cancelled.

**Pregnancy:** Please inform the radiographer if you think you might be pregnant.

**Other questions:** Please contact your Speech and Language Therapist directly if you have any questions regarding this assessment.

### Department of Speech and Language Therapy

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### Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible. In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.

**This leaflet can be made available in other languages  
and formats upon request**

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# Adult Speech and Language Therapy

## Videofluoroscopy

An x-ray procedure for assessing swallowing difficulties

## **What is a videofluoroscopy Assessment?**

It is a moving x-ray that allows us to look at your swallowing. The x-ray allows us to watch video images of food and drink moving through your mouth and throat. This is recorded to allow a more detailed investigation of what happens when you swallow and to save this as part of your medical records.

## **Where does the videofluoroscopy assessment take place?**

It is carried out in the x-ray department at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead. On arrival, please report to the x-ray reception.

## **What preparation do you need?**

- You do not need to "fast" before this procedure. You can have your usual breakfast if you wish.
- You will not need to change your clothes, but we may ask you to remove a layer if you are wearing a coat or jumper.
- Please avoid wearing jewellery around the head and neck area.
- Please ensure you wear your dentures if you normally eat and drink with them in.
- Please arrive 5-10 minutes before your appointment time.

## **Who will be there?**

Two Speech and Language Therapists and a Radiographer.

You can have a relative or carer in to observe if you wish but where possible we ask them to wait outside to reduce the risk of their exposure to unnecessary radiation.

Occasionally students observe as part of their training. If you have any objections to being observed by a student, please inform your Speech and Language Therapist before you have the procedure.

## **What happens during the procedure?**

If you can walk you will be seated on a chair with the x-ray screen next to you. If you attend in a wheelchair then the x-ray can be done whilst you are sat in your own chair.

You will be asked to eat and drink small quantities of food and fluid which contain barium or another similar product (so it shows up on the x-ray). The fluids may be thickened to different consistencies to see if this will help with your swallowing. You may be asked to turn your head, or swallow in a particular way as this sometimes improves swallowing.

One therapist will assist you with the food and drink and the other one will make notes during the procedure. The Radiographer will operate the x-ray machine.

The procedure will take 15-30 minutes.

## **Why is this being done?**

- To see if food or fluid is entering the airway (known as aspiration) when you swallow. If this happens it can increase the likelihood of you getting chest infections.
- To see if you manage particular consistencies of food or drinks better or if some are safer than others.
- To see if changing your head position or the way you swallow makes eating and/or drinking easier and safer.

## **What will happen afterwards?**

The Speech and Language Therapists look at the results and write a report which will be sent to you, your GP and any other relevant healthcare professionals such as Consultants or Dietitian.

Recommendations are made regarding what sort of food and drink you manage best and any changes that need to be made to your position or environment.

These recommendations will be explained to you immediately if possible, or at a follow up appointment.

## **Transport**

If transport via ambulance is required to get to the assessment, you will need to arrange this in advance. If you are an in-patient, an X-ray porter will be organised to collect you from the ward.