

Videofluoroscopy

This is a leaflet designed to help you understand the process of a videofluoroscopy assessment.



Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have concerns or wish to give feedback about services, your care or treatment, you can contact the PALS office on the Ground Floor of the hospital just behind the main reception.

Alternatively, you can send us your comments or suggestions on one of our comment cards, available at the PALS office, or on a feedback form on our website www.chelwest.nhs.uk/pals.

We value your opinion and invite you to provide us with feedback.

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Chelsea and Westminster Hospital **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information

Videofluoroscopy

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Videofluoroscopy

This leaflet explains what a videofluoroscopy is and how to prepare for it. It is likely that your doctor or speech & language therapist has referred you for a videofluoroscopy to investigate your swallowing difficulties further.

What is a Videofluoroscopy?

Videofluoroscopy is an examination of your swallow using an X-ray video. It provides us with moving X-ray images of your head and neck whilst eating and drinking.

This involves being asked to swallow small amounts of food and drink that contains a contrast which shows up on the X-ray. This will either be Barium or a similar contrast such as Omnipaque.

Benefits:

- Videofluoroscopy enables us to see if food or drink is going the 'wrong way' (i.e. into the airway) and why this might be happening.
- We can trial certain food and drink consistencies to see if they are easier or safer to chew and/or swallow.
- We can also test different manoeuvres, positioning or strategies to see if they are beneficial for safer swallowing.

Risks:

- Although there is a small risk given the exposure to radiation, we work closely with the radiologists to minimise the x-ray radiation you receive. If there is any possibility that you are pregnant, please inform us before the videofluoroscopy.
- Some material may 'go down the wrong way' during the procedure, but all care will be taken to minimise this risk.
- The contrast liquid used (which improves x-ray visibility) generally has no ill effects but please inform staff if you feel unwell e.g. constipation, abdominal (stomach) pain or diarrhoea. Your stools may be paler than usual for the next few days. Drinking plenty of fluid will help.

Consent:

We want to involve you in all decisions regarding your care and treatment, so we will make sure you are happy to go ahead before undertaking the procedure.

Where will the videofluoroscopy take place?

- **Chelsea and Westminster Hospital:** Clinical imaging (x-ray) department, situated on the second floor of the main building (take the lift at bank D).
- **West Middlesex University Hospital:** Clinical imaging (x-ray) department, situated on the ground floor of the main building.



Who will be present?

There will usually be two Speech and Language Therapists present; one will be assisting you and providing the items to eat and drink, the other therapist will be evaluating the images. There will also be a Radiographer who is controlling the x-ray equipment, and occasionally a Radiologist.

How do I prepare?

No special preparation is required. You do not have to fast and you may continue to eat and drink as normal (unless advised otherwise). If you are feeding through a tube, this can carry on as normal. If you wear dentures, please wear these for your appointment. If you use a special cup or cutlery, it is helpful to bring these with you.

What will happen at the appointment?

The assessment is painless and takes approximately 30 minutes. You will be asked to sit or stand by the x-ray machine, which will move around your head and neck to achieve the best view of your swallow. You may be asked to remove jewellery and/or items of clothing that have zips or metal buttons that may block the view of the head and neck.

The speech and language therapist will give you small amounts of food and drink to swallow, varying in texture and thickness. It will be mixed with the contrast which shows up on the x-ray, which might have an unusual taste.

You might be asked to try a different position or strategy to make your swallow safer or more efficient. The speech and language therapist, radiographer and radiologist will assess the effectiveness and safety of you swallow. Each swallow is recorded so that it can be reviewed later to help develop your treatment plan.

What happens after the appointment?

The speech and language therapist will give some feedback and advice immediately after the procedure, and may provide you with some new eating and drinking recommendations. Afterwards, you can return to the ward if an inpatient or return home if an outpatient. Once the video has been viewed in more detail, a report will be written and follow-up provided as necessary.

Contact information

If you have any questions regarding your videofluoroscopy appointment or you are unable to keep your appointment, please contact the Speech and Language Therapy team:

- Chelsea and Westminster: 020 3315 8874.
- West Middlesex: 020 8321 5487.