

Radiology

Paediatric barium swallow and/or meal information leaflet

You have been advised by your doctor that your child needs to have a barium swallow and/or meal examination. You have been referred to radiology to have this procedure.

This leaflet will explain what the examination involves. It may not answer all your questions, so if you have any concerns or queries, please do not hesitate to call the telephone number on your appointment letter or contact the Radiology team on 024 7696 7115.

If you feel unhappy with any part of your care, please ask to speak to a senior member of staff.

Please read this leaflet carefully to ensure you are prepared for the examination. You will need to begin your preparation for the examination **2 hours** before your appointment.

Points to remember

- Please bring any sprays or inhalers that your child is taking, with you to the appointment.
- If your child is on medication from their doctor, please continue to take it as normal.
- You may wish to bring a few toys with you for your child to play with whilst they are waiting.



What is a barium swallow and / or meal?

A barium swallow and/or meal is a special X-ray examination of the gullet (oesophagus) and stomach. The examination will be performed by a radiologist (specialised X-ray doctor) or a radiographer who may be assisted by a radiology department assistant.

Your child will be given a special white liquid drink called barium. This is a white chalky fluid which shows up on X-ray images for images of the gullet and stomach to be taken. A barium swallow focuses mainly on the gullet and a barium meal focuses mainly on the stomach. If both the gullet and stomach are examined at the same time, then the examination is called a barium swallow and meal. The procedure may take up to 30 minutes.

Preparation

Please do not allow your child to eat or drink anything for 2 hours before the appointment.

Risks/benefits of procedure

X-rays are a type of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, food we eat, and the ground. Exposure to X-rays carry a small risk, but your doctor feels that this risk is outweighed by the benefits of having this test. We will take all the safety precautions to minimise the number of X-rays your child receives.

Safety

Under radiation legislation, all patients aged 12 and over - you will be asked whether your child has started their period and the date of their last period. As the test uses radiation, we must make sure that they aren't pregnant before we start the examination. When you attend, the patient will be asked to confirm whether there is any chance of pregnancy.

What will happen when we arrive?

- When you arrive at the Radiology/X-ray Department, please follow the signs for Route 2: Fluoroscopy and Intervention and report to the reception desk. You will be registered and then directed to the reception waiting area. Your child will need to undress and put on an examination gown.
- Please feel free to bring a dressing gown to wear over the X-ray gown.

Patient Information

During the examination

You will be taken into the X-ray room where the examination will be explained to you both and you can ask any questions that you may have.

Barium swallow and/or meal:

- Your child will either be fed or asked to swallow the barium. This can be given through a modified dummy for babies, a feeding cup if the child normally uses one or in a plastic cup for older children. If your child has a special beaker which they normally like to drink from, please bring it with you to the hospital.
- X-ray pictures will be taken with your child standing up and lying on their tummy and back, following the barium as it passes down the gullet, stomach and into the small intestine.
- If the examination involves a barium meal and your child is old enough (generally over 14 years), they may be asked to swallow a small amount of “sherbet” granules with a lemon flavoured drink. This will create gas in their stomach - it is important that they **try not to burp**.

After the examination

- Once the examination is complete, your child may go home or return to school. Your child should drink plenty of fluids over the next few days to help the barium pass through the intestinal tract.
- Your child’s poo may be pale over the next few days
- If there are any problems after the examination, please see your GP

How do we get the results?

The results will not be given to you immediately. They will be sent to the doctor who referred you to us for this examination (either a consultant paediatrician or your own GP).

Other sources of information:

For information about the effects of X-rays and information about radiology departments visit the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/x-ray/>

Please note that the views expressed in these websites do not necessarily reflect the views of UHCW NHS Trust or the NHS.

Patient Information

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback



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