

# Having an endoscopy procedure to assess your swallowing (FEES assessment)

ENT and Maxillofacial Services

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Information for patients

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## Introduction

We need to find out why you are having problems swallowing. We will do this by having a fibre-optic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES) assessment.

## How is FEES done?

FEES assesses your swallowing by looking inside your throat (pharynx) and voice box (larynx). A small flexible camera (nasendoscope) is inserted into your nose. The procedure allows a trained and skilled Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) to learn about your swallowing as well as look at the effects of swallowing treatment.

## Can I eat and drink before the procedure?

Unless you have been told otherwise, you can eat and drink as usual before your appointment. If you are currently feeding through a tube, you can take your feeds as normal up until your appointment time.

**Please let the SLT know if you have any food allergies, if you have nose bleeds or have recently had any new medical issues or changes in medicines.**

## What happens during the assessment?

The FEES will be carried out by 2 trained SLTs. 1 will pass the endoscope (small camera) and the other (the interpreter) will run the other equipment. Food and drink will be prepared for you to try, but feel free to bring in your own food if you prefer. The SLT passing the camera will talk through the procedure with you. They will then guide you through the process of having the camera placed. You will be awake for this procedure. No anaesthetic is needed.

When we have a good image the other SLT will start to record the test. They will ask you to repeat some words and sounds in order to look at your throat and voice box muscles.

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You will be given some food and fluid (which may be dyed green to let us see it) to swallow. Different textures and consistencies may be offered and the SLT may try different ways of helping you to swallow. Once the test is finished the camera will be removed and all images saved.

## What happens next?

Your appointment will last about 30 to 45 minutes.

After the test, you may be given some basic information about what has been seen. However, this is not always possible. The speech and language therapists will look at your results. A report will be put in your medical notes. A copy sent to you and the relevant health care professionals. Follow-up will then be arranged as needed.

## Are there any possible side effects?

FEES is a safe procedure when done by trained SLTs in a safe environment. However, the following may occur during the procedure:

- **Discomfort:** Although quite common, discomfort should be mild and will pass quickly. Each person is different if it is too uncomfortable the test can be stopped at anytime.
- **Nose bleeds:** This is an infrequent complication of nasendoscopy. Please let the SLT know if you are have nose bleeds.

If the following happen the test will be stopped:

- **Gagging and / or being sick (vomiting):** This is very rare. It may be related to having a very sensitive throat.
- **Fainting:** This is very rare. It may result from high levels of anxiety during the procedure. Please let the SLT know if you are tend to faint.
- **Laryngospasm:** This is a short-lived involuntary muscular contraction of the vocal cords. This is very rare.

## Contact

If you have any further questions, please contact the Speech and Language Therapy Department on: **0116 258 5363**

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