

# Your child's X-ray to look at their swallowing (barium swallow test - up to age 10)

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

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## Introduction

This leaflet contains important information about how your child must get ready for the test. If your child is old enough, you can go through this leaflet with them. It is important that your child knows what to expect when they come for the test so that it can be completed quickly and easily.



## Important information for parents and carers

### Before the appointment:

- **If your child has diabetes** please contact the Radiology Department for further advice on 0116 258 6898. If your child has diabetes they should have been given an early morning appointment. If this has not happened it may be that we do not know that your child is diabetic. You may also contact your child's normal diabetes care provider to discuss the eating and drinking instructions in this leaflet.
- **If you need an interpreter, or if you have any special requirements**, please contact the radiology department for further information.
- **Medication should be taken as usual** unless you have been told otherwise by the doctor.
- Other children will **not** be allowed in the X-ray room whilst this test is being done. If you have other children please make child care arrangements for them and do not bring them into hospital if possible.
- **Follow the instructions in this leaflet** on how your child must get ready for the test.
- **Getting to the hospital:** Transport has not been arranged for this appointment. If transport is needed please contact either your GP or the Radiology Department.

**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)

## Support for people with learning disabilities

There is support available in our hospitals for patients with learning disabilities. Please contact the learning disability specialist nursing team on (0116) 250 2809 telling them when the appointment is and what examination has been booked.

## What is a barium swallow?

This X-ray is done to look at what happens to the food when your child eats. We can do this by giving them a milkshake flavoured drink that will show up when we take X-ray pictures of their tummy.

## How should my child get ready for the barium swallow test?

Please go through this leaflet with your child if you want to.



### Eating and drinking instructions:

**Your child must not have any food or drink for 4 hours** before their appointment. It is important that your child's tummy is empty when they have this X-ray test. It is ok to have small sips of water if needed to take medication.

**Medication should be taken as usual** unless you have been told otherwise by the doctor.

### What to bring with you:

- You can bring a **cup, feeding bottle or teat** that your child is familiar with for the test.
- Your child may be able to wear their own **spare clothes** for the test. If you can, please bring a plain T-shirt with no decoration so that it does not show up on X-ray, and spare trousers.
- If you are pregnant or think you might be, you may want to bring another parent or carer with you to support your child during the test.
- You can bring some **food and drink** for your child to have after the appointment.

### At the appointment:

1 parent or carer may go into the X-ray room with your child when the test takes place. You will not be allowed to stay in the X-ray room if you are pregnant or think you could be.

## What happens when we arrive for the barium swallow test?

- When you get to the Radiology Department you will be shown to the Children's X-ray Department.
- Your child may be asked to change into a hospital gown. If you prefer you can bring a change of clothes for your child. This could be a plain T-shirt without any decoration so that it does not show up on X-ray, and spare trousers.
- When you are ready your child will be taken into the X-ray room. 1 parent or carer can come in.

## What happens in the X-ray room?

- In the room you will be told what is going to happen during the X-ray test. You can ask any questions that you may have.
- Your child will need to lie on the X-ray table.
- They will be asked to drink a milkshake flavoured drink called barium. This drink is needed so the inside of your child's tummy can be seen by our X-ray cameras.
- We will take the X-ray pictures when your child drinks the barium.
- Your child will also be asked to roll onto their side so that we can take X-ray pictures in different positions.
- Babies and toddlers will be fed the drink from a bottle, feeding cup or have it syringed into their mouth. If they have a favourite cup or teat, you may want to bring this with you.

## How long will the test take?

The X-ray test will take between 10 and 20 minutes. The time will vary slightly for each person.

## Who will be in the X-ray room?

A doctor who specialises in imaging and X-ray treatments (a radiologist) will do the examination. There will also be a radiographer and there may also be an assistant practitioner and a radiology assistant in the room to help you. As we are a teaching hospital a student may also be in the room. If you wish, you may ask that students are not in the room during your child's examination.

## What happens when the X-ray test is finished?

After the X-ray test you can go home and your child can eat and drink as usual.

The barium drink will go through your child's tummy and pass out in their poo within a few days. This means their poo may look white or lighter in colour for a few days. Barium can cause constipation. Drinking plenty of fluids and eating foods high in fibre until the barium leaves your child's body can help prevent them becoming constipated.

## How do I find out what the results are?

The results will not be given to you straight away.

The X-ray pictures will be looked at carefully by the radiologist and they will send the results to the doctor that wanted your child to have these X-rays.

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

The risk from having X-rays is very small. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, the food we eat, and the ground. Each X-ray gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation. The radiation from the X-rays during a barium swallow is equivalent to getting a few months of natural background radiation.

Any questions or concerns about the use of X-rays can be answered at the time of the appointment. We will take all safeguards to minimize the amount of X-rays your child is exposed to.

## What if I need to talk to someone?



If you have any questions or concerns, or cannot make your appointment, please call the Radiology Department on **0116 258 8765 (option 1)** - 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)