



# Your Barium Swallow Examination

## Radiology Department

### Great Western Hospital

If you need to cancel or you have queries or concerns please contact the department on

**01793 60 50 59**

Opening Hours

**Monday - Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm**



# Your Barium Swallow Examination

## What is a Barium Swallow?

It is the examination of the oesophagus and pharynx. You will be asked to drink a fluid called Barium so that these areas can be clearly seen.

The procedure will only take about 10 minutes, but please allow 30 minutes in the department.

## Are there any risks involved?

The likelihood of complications is extremely rare. Any concerns you may have can be discussed before we begin the procedure. Alternatively, ring the number given below.

During your procedure you will receive a dose of ionising radiation to help us form images of your body and this will provide your doctor with detailed information. The radiation dose is always kept as low as possible. The actual dose you receive will vary depending on the type of procedure you are having, but your doctor has considered this and feels that this is the best procedure for you to have to help diagnose or treat your condition.

We are all at risk of developing cancer in our lifetime and the added risk from undergoing your procedure is small and is outweighed because of the benefits it provides and every procedure that you have in Radiology has been assessed to



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ensure that the benefit outweighs the risk. For more information see the displays within the department or ask a member of staff.

## **Do I have to have this examination?**

Your doctor has requested this examination as it is the simplest way of gaining images to diagnose your problem.

## **You must ring for further advice if any of the following applies to you:**

- **You are diabetic and you have concerns about not eating for the period of time given in these instructions.**
- **You are epileptic**
- **You think you may be pregnant**
- **You are breast feeding.**
- **You weigh more than 22 stones/140 kg. There are weight limits on some of our equipment.**

**The number to ring is:**

**01793 60 50 59**

**9.30am – 4.30 pm**



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## **Before the examination:**

### **Morning** appointment:

- You may have a light breakfast before 7.00 am. Nothing to eat after 7.00 am. Sips of water can be taken up until two hours before the examination.

### **Afternoon** appointment:

- You may have a light snack before 11.00 am and drink as normal. Then have nothing to eat after 11.00 am. You can have sips of water after 11.00 am for up to 2 hours before the examination.

## **During the examination:**

- You will be asked to change into a gown. There will be someone to help you with this if necessary
- Then you will be given the Barium.
- X-rays will then be taken in various positions

## **After the examination:**

- You may return to your normal diet immediately.
- The barium can cause constipation. Drink plenty of fluid for a few days to avoid this. You may wish to take a mild laxative.
- If a doctor from the hospital sent you, you will receive a letter or a follow up appointment to discuss the results.



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From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**

#### **Document Control**

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