



Your Child's Barium Swallow

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 Child's Barium Swallow

What is a Barium Swallow and Meal?

This is an examination which takes images of your child's oesophagus and stomach or 'gullet'.

Your child will be asked to drink a fluid called Barium so that these areas can be clearly seen.

The procedure will take up to 20 minutes.

Are there any risks involved?

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



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Does my child have to have this examination?

The paediatrician has requested this examination as it is the simplest way of gaining images to diagnose the problem.

- **If your child is on medication or you have any queries regarding their medical condition, cannot please ring this number:**

01793 60 50 59
9.30am – 4.30 pm

- **You should use the same number if you are unable to attend.**

Before the examination:

We generally do not ask children to undress but your child should wear clothing, especially tops, without metal buttons, zips or metal applique. Metal may show up on the X-ray. A plain T-shirt is ideal.

Your child should not eat or drink for two hours prior to the appointment time.

What does barium taste like?

Barium is a white chalky liquid. Adults drink it without flavouring, but to make the barium more palatable for your child we would



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ask you to bring your child's favourite drink to flavour the barium.

For babies we suggest you bring a bottle of milk. For young children we would ask you to bring a familiar feeding bottle or cup. For older children a drink such as a 'Fruit Shoot' is ideal as it has a strong flavour and the white barium cannot be seen through the bottle.

During the examination:

- The procedure will be explained in detail before we begin.
- Older children will be shown the X-ray table and how it works
- Depending on the age of the child and the specific concern, your child will be asked to lie, sit or stand up and drink the flavoured barium. Your child may be asked to move into various positions by rolling on the table.
- X-ray images will be taken at various stages.

After the examination:

- Your child may eat and drink a normal diet immediately.
- The barium can cause constipation. Give plenty of fluid for a few days to avoid this.
- The Radiologist may be able to give you some preliminary results on the day but the images will need to be assessed in detail and the final report will be sent to the Paediatrician who requested the examination



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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

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