

Videofluoroscopy Clinic (Adult)

This leaflet explains about having a videofluoroscopy to assess your swallow, including the benefits, risks and what you can expect to happen during the procedure. If you have any further questions, please speak to the speech and language therapist, nurse or doctor caring for you.

What is a Videofluoroscopy?

A videofluoroscopy (VFS) uses video to record an x-ray examination of your swallowing in detail. The Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) will ask you to swallow different food and drink. Afterwards, the SLTs watch the video back to examine what happened and make a plan for your eating and drinking, depending on the results.

Why should I have a Videofluoroscopy?

The videofluoroscopy allows your SLT and doctor to see what happens when you swallow, e.g. if food or drink gets stuck in your mouth or throat or goes down the wrong way (aspiration). We may then be able to recommend exercises, different positions to eat or drink in or different types of food or drink that will make swallowing safer or easier.

What happens during a Videofluoroscopy?

You will go to the x-ray department where the assessment will take about 20 minutes. There will be two SLTs and a radiographer in the room and you will be asked to sit or stand by the x-ray machine. You might need to wear a hospital gown and be asked to remove jewellery. You can keep on your glasses

One part of the machine may move around by your head and neck when you swallow.

The SLTs will ask you to take small amounts of drink and food as appropriate. Examples might include custard, banana, cake or biscuit. You may be asked to try a different position or strategy. The SLTs will explain this.

Are there any risks or side effects?

During the videofluoroscopy, there is a risk that some food or fluid mixed with “contrast” (a special liquid which shows up on x-ray) may go down the wrong way (be aspirated). All care will be taken to minimise this risk. We will also take care to minimise the amount of x-ray radiation to which you are exposed. Some people may be allergic to barium and sometimes people experience constipation or, rarely, diarrhoea.

Are there any alternatives?

There is no other assessment which offers this amount of detailed information about your swallowing and which helps your SLT to manage your symptoms.

How can I prepare for my Videofluoroscopy?

You do not need to fast for the test and can continue your normal activities. If you are already eating and drinking you can continue to do so as normal. If you are fed through a tube, this can continue as normal. If you wear dentures, please wear them. If you use any specialist equipment at home, e.g. an adapted cup, please bring them to the appointment.

Where will the appointment take place?

Your appointment will take place in the Imaging Department of either St George's or Queen Mary's Hospital.

Asking for your consent

Your SLT team wants to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment so will make sure you are happy to go ahead with the procedure. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said "yes" previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

Will I feel any pain?

You should not experience any pain during your videofluoroscopy.

What happens after your Videofluoroscopy?

At the end, the SLTs analyse the results of the assessment and make recommendations.

The SLTs will then write a report. If you are in hospital, the report will be put in your medical notes and your SLT will discuss the results with you on the ward. If you are an outpatient, the SLTs will contact you with an appointment and discuss the outcome with you then.

The video recording will be kept by the SLT Department. It may be used for teaching purposes but your name will NOT be used. Let us know if you do not want this to happen.

After your videofluoroscopy, you can resume your normal activities and eat and drink as normal.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions or concerns about your videofluoroscopy, please contact your SLT in the first instance.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer). **Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



Reference: THE_VFS_03 **Published:** April 2021 **Review date:** April 2023