



## **Diagnostic Imaging**

# **BARIUM SWALLOW – Babies**

### **What is a barium swallow?**

This is an examination of the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and the first part of the bowel. As the child drinks, the barium can be seen on the monitor.

### **What does the procedure involve?**

We will need your baby to drink a special liquid (barium) so the doctor can see the oesophagus and stomach. Barium is a white chalky liquid. Your baby will drink the liquid through a straw or from a bottle or beaker, it can be helpful for you to bring your child's usual bottle. The drink is not unpleasant and can be mixed with your child's milk or squash, but some children find it difficult to drink.

The patient will be asked to drink the liquid lying down, whilst the x-ray camera is over their tummy. As the child drinks, the barium can be seen on the monitor.

The test will take approximately 20 minutes.

We normally ask one parent/carer to stay with the child during the examination to provide support and encouragement. We cannot allow you to stay with your baby if you are pregnant, it is important to protect an unborn child. If you are, or may be, pregnant it would be a good idea to bring someone else who can stay with your child.

### **Is there any preparation?**

Your child may need an empty stomach for this test. If this is the case, they will need to fast before the examination. Please follow the instructions on the appointment letter.

Please bring a clean baby's nappy and sterile teat with you.

### **After the examination**

After the examination your child can go back to their normal eating and drinking.

The barium will make your child's stools pale in colour for a couple of days after the examination; this is nothing to worry about.

Sometimes barium can cause constipation so it is a good idea to ensure your child drinks plenty of fluid after the examination to prevent constipation.

## RESULTS

Your imaging examination will be reported on by a Diagnostic Imaging specialist – e.g. Radiologist, Sonographer, Reporting Radiographer.

The report will be issued to your referring G.P. or Consultant team who will inform you of the next steps in your care pathway.

The availability of the report can vary dependent on the type and complexity of the imaging examination.

## AND FINALLY

If you have any questions or concerns please contact us on (01305) 254428

### About this leaflet:

Author: Linda Chappell, Operational Superintendent  
Written: December 2018  
Approved: September 2019  
Review date: September 2022  
Edition: v2

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



**INTEGRITY | RESPECT | TEAMWORK | EXCELLENCE**

© 2019 Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Williams Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2JY  
[www.dchft.nhs.uk](http://www.dchft.nhs.uk)