



Diagnostic Imaging

BARIUM SWALLOW – Child

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 child to drink a special liquid (barium) so the doctor can see the oesophagus and stomach. Barium is a white chalky liquid. Your child 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 cup. 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, and possibly standing up, 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 20-30 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 child 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 for this examination?

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.

After the examination

After the examination, your child can go back to their normal eating and drinking. It is a good idea to bring a favourite snack and drink for your child to have once the examination is finished.

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 and eats extra fruit and vegetables after the examination to prevent constipation.

How will we find out the results of the examination?

Your imaging examination will be reported on by a Diagnostic Imaging specialist - eg 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

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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



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