

A guide to your Barium Swallow Examination

You have been referred to the Radiology Department to have a Barium Swallow examination. This information leaflet will help explain the procedure you are having. If you have further queries or if there is anything you do not understand, please feel free to contact the Radiology Department and a member of staff can discuss it with you in more detail.

What is a Barium Swallow?

A barium swallow is an examination of your oesophagus (food pipe). It investigates possible causes for symptoms such as difficulty swallowing etc. The procedure takes place in the Radiology Department and will last approximately 20 minutes.

What are the benefits of having a Barium Swallow?

This examination will provide information on the structure and function of your oesophagus. It can highlight reasons for the symptoms you are having, and these can be addressed.

What are the risks?

A barium swallow is a relatively low risk examination. Barium is harmless when ingested. In the event of barium being aspirated however (going into lungs instead of oesophagus), there can be a small risk of developing chest conditions such as pneumonia. A considerable amount of aspiration would need to have taken place for this to happen though. Whoever is performing the procedure will know when to stop if aspiration is occurring.

Fluoroscopy uses X-ray radiation. The dose that you get from fluoroscopy examination is small and the associated risks are low. The benefits of having the examination outweigh any risk.

Clinical staff are responsible for making sure the dose that you receive is kept as low as necessary to aid your diagnosis or treatment.

Are there any alternatives?

There are no other examinations available that will give us the same information that this test will provide. Other imaging, such as an Oesophagogastroduodenoscopy or OGD for short, (procedure that involves a scope being passed down your throat) is often done in conjunction with this examination but cannot replace it as it does not provide information on functionality.

Is there anything I need to do to prepare for a Barium Swallow procedure?

Your stomach must be empty to allow a thorough investigation.

- If your appointment is in the morning: On the day before your investigation, take your last meal **before 10PM**.
- If your appointment is in the afternoon: On the day of your appointment, please take your last meal **before 8AM**.

If you are on medication for heart conditions, or conditions such as epilepsy or hypertension, this can be taken as normal.

If you are diabetic and on tablets or insulin, **DO NOT** take this medication before your appointment. Bring any medication you take and some food with you and you can take these as soon as the test is complete.

What happens on the day of your procedure?

A member of staff will call you from the waiting room and verbally check your ID.

If you are of childbearing potential and between the ages of 10 - 55, you will be asked to sign a form to say that there is no possibility that you are pregnant.

PLEASE LET THE X-RAY STAFF MEMBER KNOW IF YOU ARE PREGNANT OR IF THERE IS A CHANCE YOU MIGHT BE

Let the X-ray staff member know if you have any allergies.

You will be shown into a changing cubicle and asked to undress from your waist upward. This is to remove any clothing and metal which may obscure detail on the images. You will be provided with an examination gown.

Asking for your consent

The Radiographer will ask you if you are happy for the examination to go ahead. This is called verbal consent. If you do not wish to have the X-Ray scan or are undecided, please tell the Radiographer. If you wish to have a chaperone present during your scan, please alert a health care professional before the scan begins.

Students/trainees may be present during the examination but only with your verbal consent.

Please remember that you can ask the Radiographer any questions you have at any time before, during or after your scan.

What happens during the Barium Swallow procedure?

- You will be asked to swallow some fizzy granules with some lemon juice. This will create gas in your stomach and will improve the quality of the images.

- A Radiologist (X-ray Doctor) or a Clinical Specialist Radiographer will take real time X-ray images as you swallow some barium (chalky white liquid) and watch how your oesophagus and stomach are working.
- The test will begin with you standing upright. Halfway through the test you will be brought to lie down and asked to turn different ways on the table.
- When enough images have been taken, the examination is over.

What happens after your Barium Swallow procedure?

After the test, you can carry on with your normal daily routine. Diabetic patients should resume taking their medication. You should not need the toilet more frequently or with more urgency than you normally would. You can resume your normal eating habits but try to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fibre for a few days after the examination to avoid becoming constipated.

Your bowel motions will be paler than normal for a few days after the test.

Will I feel any pain?

The examination should not be painful. A few people report having mild bloating and discomfort in their tummy after the procedure. You're advised to drink plenty of fluids for a couple of days after the procedure to avoid this. If you feel unwell afterwards, contact the Radiology Department or your GP.

When will I get the Barium Swallow results?

The Radiologist/Clinical Specialist Radiographer who performed the procedure will write a formal report. This report can be accessed by the Doctor who referred you within a few days following the test. You will be able to discuss the results and treatment options with the referring team at your outpatient follow up appointment.

Other things we need to know before you arrive

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are not able to attend for your appointment and we can arrange a more suitable appointment for you.

Please let us know if you will have problems standing, if you use a wheelchair or have any other mobility issues that we may need to know about. Please let us know if there is a possibility you could be pregnant.

Image sharing

Your images will be electronically stored on the hospital picture archiving system. This data can be accessed throughout the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and other doctors and health care professionals who are directly involved in your care. The ability to share images and radiological reports will improve the safety and quality of your care by ensuring that the right information is available in the right place at the right time.

To improve the medical services we provide we may also use your data as anonymously as possible for internal audit and medical education. If you would prefer that your data is not used for these purposes, please inform a member of staff when you attend for your examination.

If your data is to be used for research, then a separate consent process will be used. You will be asked for your consent, should this be the case.

Contact us

If you have any queries, we will be happy to answer any questions on the day of your Fluoroscopy scan or you can contact us on the number given on your appointment letter.

Feedback

We hope you found the information in this leaflet helpful. If it did not tell you what you needed to know or you would like to provide any feedback on your experience, please let us know so that we can make any necessary improvements.

You can provide feedback on your experience:

Telephone: **028 9504 8000** (Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm)

Textphone: **18001 028 950 48000**

By email: compliments@belfasttrust.hscni.net

By email: complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net

By completing an online form: <https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/contact-us/compliments-and-complaints/feedback-form/>

Care Opinion



We invite you to share your experience by clicking the following link:
<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/>

or by scanning the following QR code on your smartphone or tablet:



Language and accessible support services

Deaf/ Hard of Hearing

If a Sign Language interpreter is required, please either telephone **028 9615 8900** via the Sign Video remote interpreting service <https://signvideo.co.uk/deaf-community/> or email us at MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net and we will arrange one for your appointment. Please have your H&C number ready when calling or include it in your email. This can be found at the top right corner of any Health and Social Care letters you may have received.

If you are unable to hear on the phone and need to contact us with regards to your appointment you can email us at MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Do you need this information in another format or language?

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, including Braille, large print, CD, audio tape please contact the telephone number **028 9615 8900** or e-mail address MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net, and we will do our best to meet your needs.

Polish - Czy potrzebujesz tych informacji w innym formacie lub języku?

Fundusz ma dostęp do usług w zakresie tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych. Jeśli potrzebujesz tych informacji w innym języku lub formacie, w tym w piśmie Braille'a, dużym druku, na płycie CD, kasecie magnetofonowej, skontaktuj się z nami pod numerem telefonu lub adresem e-mail **028 9615 8900**/
MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net, a my dołożymy wszelkich starań, aby spełnić Twoje potrzeby.

Arabic - هل تحتاج هذه المعلومات بصيغة أو بلغة أخرى؟

تستطيع الجمعية توفير خدمات الترجمة الفورية والتحريرية. إذا احتجت هذه المعلومات بلغة أو بصيغة أخرى، بما فيها صيغة برايل Braille أو صيغة بالأحرف الكبيرة، أو في سي دي CD أو في شريط مسموع، يُرجى الاتصال برقم التليفون أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني **028 9615 8900** / MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net، وسوف نبذل قصارى جهدنا في تلبية احتياجاتك.

Lithuanian - Ar jums reikia šios informacijos kitu formatu ar kalba?

Tarnyba gali suteikti vertimo žodžiu ir raštu paslaugas. Jei reikia šios informacijos kita kalba ar formatu, įskaitant Brailio raštą, didelį šriftą, kompaktinį diską, garso įrašą, skambinkite telefonu arba susisiekite el. paštu **028 9615 8900**/
MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net ir mes padarysime viską, kad patenkintume jūsų poreikius.

Romanian - Aveți nevoie de aceste informații într-un alt format sau altă limbă?

Trustul are acces la servicii de interpretariat și traducere. Dacă aveți nevoie de aceste informații într-o altă limbă sau într-un alt format, inclusiv Braille, tipărire cu caractere de mari dimensiuni, CD, înregistrare audio, atunci vă rugăm să ne contactați la numărul de telefon sau la adresa de e-mail **028 9615 8900**/
MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net, iar noi vom face tot posibilul pentru satisfacerea necesităților dumneavoastră.

Tetum - Ita presiza atu informasaun ida ne'e iha formatu ka lian seluk ka lae?

Fidusiáriu ida ne'e iha asesu ba servisu durubasa no tradusaun. Se Ita presiza informasaun ida ne'e iha lian ka formatu seluk, inklui letra Braille, letra boot, CD, kasete audio, entaun favór telefone númeru ka enderesu e-mail **028 9615 8900**/
MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net, no ami sei halo esforsu tomak atu kumpre Ita-nia nesesidade sira.