

Barium Swallow Tests



Learn about

- ✓ **Barium Swallow tests**
- ✓ **and how to get ready for one.**

What is a Barium Swallow?



A Barium Swallow is a special test that uses X-rays.

It helps us look at your **food pipe**.

A **food pipe** is the tube that carries food from your mouth to your stomach.



The test helps find out why you might have problems eating, drinking or swallowing.



The test takes about 20 minutes.



The test helps us

- ✓ understand how your food pipe works
- ✓ and finds out how to help you.

How safe is the test?



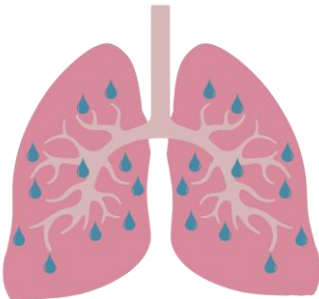
Barium Swallow tests are very safe for most people.

It should not be painful.



You will swallow a white liquid called **barium**.

Barium helps us take clear pictures of your food pipe. It is safe to swallow.



There is a very small risk that barium goes into your lungs. This might cause a chest infection.

The doctor will stop the test if this happens.



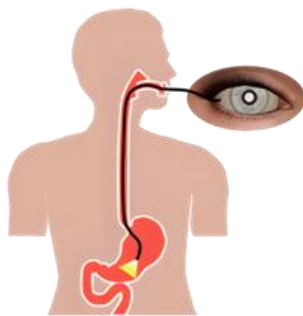
The test uses a small amount of X-rays.

Staff will make sure the X-ray is as safe as possible.

Can I have a different test?



No. No other test gives us the same information as a Barium Swallow test.



Sometimes another test called an **OGD** is also used.

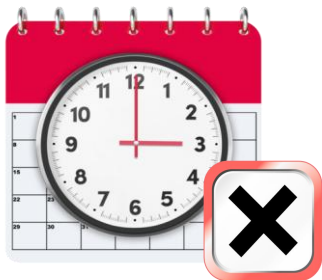
An OGD uses a camera to look down your throat.

An OGD shows us what it looks like inside your food pipe.

But it does not show how well your food pipe is working.

You may need a Barium Swallow and an OGD.

Before your appointment



Tell us if you can not come to your appointment

We can find you a better date and time to have the test.



Tell us if you use a wheelchair or find it hard to stand and move around.



Tell us if you might be pregnant.



If you have any questions you can

- ✓ call the phone number on your appointment letter or
- ✓ ask us on the day of your test.

Getting ready for the test



Your stomach needs to be empty.

Morning tests

If your test is in the morning do not eat or drink after 10pm the night before.



Afternoon tests

If your test is in the afternoon you may have a small breakfast before 8am.

Do not eat or drink after 8am



You can drink small sips of water if needed.



Take any heart, epilepsy or blood pressure tablets as normal.

Do not take diabetes tablets or insulin before the test.

Bring your diabetes tablets or insulin and food with you to take after the test.

What happens on the day?



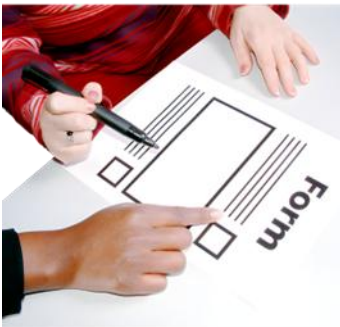
Go to the hospital radiology department.

Staff will check your name and details.

A staff member will call you from the waiting area.



You can ask to have someone with you while you have the test.



Please tell staff if you

- ✓ are pregnant
- ✓ might be pregnant
- ✓ have any allergies

We might ask you to sign a form to show you have told us you are not pregnant.



You will go to a changing room.

You must take off clothes and anything metal from your top half.

You will be given a hospital gown to wear.

Giving your consent



You will be asked if you are happy to have the test.

This is called your **consent**.

You can say yes or no.



Sometimes you will be asked if students can watch your test being done.

You can say yes or no to this.



You can ask questions at any time.

What happens during the test?



You will swallow fizzy granules and lemon juice.

This creates gas in your stomach to help us take good pictures.



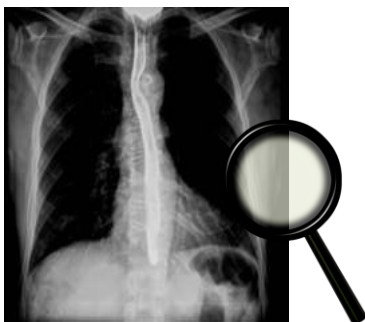
You will then drink the **barium**. It is white and chalky.



A special doctor or trained person will take X-ray pictures.

The test starts while you stand up.

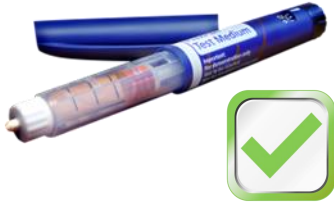
Halfway through you will be asked to lie down and turn in different directions.



We watch your food pipe and stomach using a special X-ray.

Once all X-ray pictures are taken the test is finished.

What happens after the test?



You can carry on with your day.

If you have diabetes then you can take your medication.



Some people feel a bit bloated or uncomfortable. This goes away quickly.

Your poo may look pale for a few days.



Drink plenty of water.



You can eat as normal.

Eat food with fibre.
For example, fruit and vegetables.
This will help you poo.



If you feel unwell, call your GP or the Radiology Department.

Getting your results



A doctor will write a report after your test.

The report is sent to the doctor who sent you to get the Barium Swallow test.



You will talk about the results at your next hospital appointment.

Contact Us



If you have any questions you can:

- ✓ call the phone number on your appointment letter or
- ✓ ask us on the day of your test.

What happens to your X-rays?



Your X-ray pictures are saved on a computer.

Only your care team can see them.

This helps doctors share the right information safely.



We might use your X-ray to train staff or check how well we work.

No one will know they are your X-rays.

Tell a member of staff if you do not want this to happen.



We will ask you if we want to use your X-rays for research.

Care Opinion



Share your health and social care experience at

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➤ or by scanning the QR code.

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