

Your doctor has referred you for a Barium Swallow. This will take place in the Imaging Department (also known as Radiology or x-ray department).

What is a Barium Swallow?

This test is to look at the throat (pharynx) and oesophagus (gullet) whilst you are swallowing. Your doctor will have explained why you need to have this.

This is a painless test which involves swallowing a drink that contains barium (a white substance which shows up the outline of the area being examined on X-ray pictures).

Your doctor then takes x-rays to find out what is causing your symptoms.

The barium X-ray machine is a table which can stand up or lie down, with a camera just in front of you. Within the room there will be either a Radiologist or a Radiographer Advanced Practitioner, and a Radiographer or Health Care Support Worker.

Do I need to do any special preparation before the Barium Swallow?

You should not eat or drink anything for 6 hours before the test.

What happens when I arrive?

On arrival in the Imaging Department, we will ask you to change into a gown. You can bring your clothes with you into the examination room when the time comes for your test.

If I am diabetic, taking tablets or medicine, should I stop them?

If you are diabetic, we can arrange an early morning appointment. Please contact 0141 347 8379 if this not the case. You can take other medication as normal.

Is there anything I need to tell the staff before I have my X-Ray examination?

Please tell us if you think you may be pregnant. This procedure usually takes place within 10 days of your period starting.

In all cases, tell us if you have asthma, any allergies, or if you have had any problems with injections for x-rays or scans in the past.

If you are prone to choking on your food or drink, please tell staff the staff about it when you come for your test.

What does it involve?

The Radiologist or Radiographer Advanced Practitioner will ask you about your symptoms and explain what is going to happen. During the test you stand on a step in front of the X-ray machine whilst we take X-ray images as you swallow the barium liquid.

The table is laid flat during the test and we take further x-ray images with you lying on your back and side. If we are examining your stomach then we may also give you an injection (Buscopan) into your arm to relax the muscles in your digestive system for a clearer examination.

We may give you some granules (Carbex) and lemon juice to help us take better pictures. This will cause some gas to be formed in the stomach, giving you a sense of fullness during the test.

Will I get an injection?

Some patients may need to have an injection of Buscopan in a vein in their arm which helps to relax their stomach muscles.

If you need this injection the radiologist or advanced practitioner will explain this to you at the time of the test.

How long will it take?

A Barium Swallow test normally takes 10-15 minutes. However you should plan to be in the department for 1 hour.

Although we make every effort to meet our appointment times, delays may occur due to emergency patients. We will let you know if this is the case.

What are the risks?

The level of radiation we use is very small and the benefits of the examination are thought to outweigh any risks.

Can I bring someone with me?

You can bring a friend or relative with you but we will not allow them into the examination room. Please note; we may ask them to wait in the main reception area.

If you need to bring your children please make sure there is also an adult with you as we are unable to provide childcare facilities.

After the scan

In most cases, as soon as the test is finished you can go home. If you have had an injection to relax your stomach muscle you may have blurred vision for an hour and we advise you not to drive until this settles.

You can eat and drink as normal and start your usual activities straight after the test.

Are there any side or after effects?

We would not normally expect you to have any side effects after this test as the body does not absorb barium, however the barium may make you constipated. To help prevent this drink plenty of fluids over the next few days to flush the Barium through your system.

The barium will make your faeces white or pale until it has all passed.

When will I know the result?

We will send the results to the person who referred you for the test. Your referrer will make arrangements to tell you the result.

Any other questions?

Please ask a member of the team in the Imaging Department.

- Please**
- Do not bring any valuables with you
 - Call us if you need advice
 - Call us as soon as possible if you can't keep this appointment – we can make you another and give yours to someone else.

Contact Centre Telephone Number

0141 347 8379

www.nhsggc.org.uk

Review Date: July 2020

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