

Videofluoroscopy (VFS)

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

What is a videofluoroscopy?

A videofluoroscopy (VFS) is a technique used to gain more information about your swallowing difficulty. You will be asked to swallow small amounts of food and fluids of different consistencies which will be recorded as a moving video X-ray.

The study allows us to see how you are currently managing with swallowing, and whether food or drink gets stuck in your mouth or throat or goes down the wrong way (aspiration).

Why do I need a videofluoroscopy?

The videofluoroscopy allows your speech and language therapist to see what happens when you swallow. In particular we will be looking:

- To see if the food or drink goes the wrong way and enters the airway (aspiration).
- To see if different consistencies of food or fluid are easier and safer to swallow than others.
- To see if different strategies such as different head positions or exercises help to improve your swallowing.

What are the risks?

During the videofluoroscopy, there is a risk that some of the food / fluid may go down the wrong way. All care will be taken to minimise this risk and the amount of material that may potentially go down the wrong way.

We will also take care to minimise the amount of x-ray radiation you are exposed to. If you are, or may be pregnant you must inform a member of staff.

The use of 'contrast' (a special material which shows up on x-ray) during the procedure is not usually associated with any problems, but please let us know if you feel unwell during or after the examination.

Where will my videofluoroscopy take place?

In the x-ray department at North Devon District Hospital.

Who will be present?

The speech and language therapist will lead the assessment with a radiographer present.

How do I prepare for the videofluoroscopy?

No preparation is needed before having a videofluoroscopy. If you are already eating and drinking, you can continue to do so. If you are fed through a tube, this can continue as normal.

What happens during a videofluoroscopy?

Your appointment may take up to 1 hour.

You will be asked to sit or stand by the x-ray machine. One part of the machine may move around by your head and neck when you swallow to achieve the best view.

The speech and language therapist will ask you to take small amounts of drink and food as appropriate. The food or drink is mixed with 'contrast' which shows up on x-ray.

The speech and language therapist will assess the effectiveness and safety of your swallow.

You may be asked to try a different position or strategy to see if this makes your swallow safer or more efficient. You should not experience any pain.

Each swallow is recorded on video so that it can be reviewed later to help develop your treatment plan.

What happens after the procedure?

At the end the speech and language therapist will go through the results of the assessment and discuss what will happen next. Please let us know if you want any more information or if you have any concerns.

The speech and language therapist will give you specific advice about the consistency of food and drinks you can have. You can then resume your normal activities.

The speech and language therapist will write a report which will be sent to your GP.

Further information

For more information, please contact the speech and language therapy department at North Devon District Hospital on **01271 322388**.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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