

# Fibreoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)

## Other formats

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## What is a fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES)?

Fibreoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES) is an examination used to look at how you swallow. It aims to find out how your muscles work when you swallow and what might be causing your swallowing difficulties.

## Why is it needed?

We use FEES to understand and help with your swallowing difficulties. It enables us to see whether:

- food, drink or saliva is going down the wrong way (i.e. into your airway).
- some food and drink consistencies are easier for you to swallow than others and why.
- your swallowing difficulties can be helped by altering the position of your head or body.
- there are any other changes we can recommend that may help you.

## What does it involve?

Two Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) will carry out the procedure.

During FEES, the Speech & Language Therapist uses a very small tube-like camera with a light on the end. This is called an endoscope. The endoscope is flexible, and connects to a computer and video monitor or screen. Your swallowing test is usually recorded so that it can be watched again later.

You will be seated or propped up in bed so that you are comfortable. The tube will be gently inserted through your nose and will bend to look into your throat. You will be given some things to eat and drink. Food dye may be added to improve the view of your swallowing. The Speech and Language Therapist can see a picture of your throat on the computer screen and can watch the food/drink as it passes through.

## How long will it take?

Completing a FEES may take around 30 minutes.

## Where is it done?

The equipment needed for the FEES can be moved to different places. This means that it may be done at your bedside on the ward, or you may go to an outpatient clinic room to have it done.

## What preparations are needed?

There is no preparation necessary for this test. If you are eating and drinking then you may continue to do so right up until the FEES is carried out. If you are currently feeding through a tube, you can take your feeds as normal.

If you have any food allergies or strong dislikes to certain foods, please tell your Speech and Language Therapist before the appointment. You may bring in alternative food if you wish.

## How will I feel during the test?

FEES can cause mild to moderate discomfort as the scope is inserted but once it is in position, this feeling normally improves. Anaesthetic cannot be used as it may numb the throat and affect the swallow.

## What happens after the test?

The Speech and Language Therapist will tell you about the results of the test and you may even watch the video so you can see the test yourself. If your FEES is done at the outpatients clinic, you can go home immediately after the appointment as there are no after-effects.

The therapist will use the results to plan your treatment and, if indicated, will talk to you about what kinds of food and drink are the safest for you. Results of the test will be fed back to the healthcare team and a written report will be added to your medical notes.

## Are there any risks?

FEES is a safe test with very few problems reported, however if you have a history of nose bleeds or fainting, please let your therapist know prior to the test.

## Further information

For any questions or to change an appointment, please contact the SLT Team at North Devon District Hospital on 01271 322388.

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## 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 [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

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Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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