

Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study

The videofluoroscopic swallow study is a recorded x-ray test in which your child swallows barium under an X-ray, so the process of swallowing and the movement of food from the mouth to the stomach can be watched. It is also called a modified barium swallow study.

Why is it performed?

Videofluoroscopic swallow studies are used when there is a concern about how well your child swallows, how well the airway is protected during swallowing, and how well food moves from the mouth to the stomach. Your child's doctor wants to see whether food or liquid is being aspirated (drawn into) the child's airway. This is a serious situation which can result in chronic lung and breathing problems.

Some reasons to do this study may include:

- Frequent choking
- Cough or gagging during meals
- Trouble handling saliva
- Gurgly respiration
- Chronic respiratory problems (such as pneumonia)
- Very fussy eating behaviors
- Difficulty directing food to be swallowed

Your child will need a referral for this study.

Where is the study done?

The study is usually done in the Radiology department as an outpatient. Usually the radiologist, a speech pathologist and occupational therapist are present to interpret the study.

What to expect

Before the study, we will talk with you and your child to look at your child's eating skills and to discuss your concerns. This helps the therapist know the best way to give the barium and what types of textures will be necessary to use during the study (thick, thin, chewy, etc.).

You may be asked to stay during the study to help your child stay calm. You and anyone else in the room will need to wear X-ray protection capes.

Your child will be seated in an upright support chair. Views may be taken from the front and/or side. Your child will be given one or more differently textured barium mixtures that show up well on x-ray.

Some children take thin liquid and others may take a paste or chewable food that has been coated with barium. You might be asked to bring your child's favorite bottle, cup, or spoon to keep the procedure as familiar to your child as possible. The barium liquid or paste can be mixed with favorite foods you bring from home.



Child is seated in an upright support chair. Views may be taken from the front and/or side.

IN CARE OF KIDS

Your child is given small tastes, and the video x-ray traces the swallow and follows the food or liquid down the throat to the stomach. Not much barium is needed to get a good view of a swallow. Different treatment options may be tried on the spot if we find a problem and want to see how different textures or positions change the results.

Results

Your child's doctor, the radiologist, and/or the other specialists will share the results with you. They will discuss the best course of treatment.

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