

# VIDEOFLUOROSCOPIC SWALLOW STUDY (VFSS)

## A patient's guide

### What is a VFSS?

A VFSS is a moving x-ray of your swallow. This study produces moving video images of your mouth and throat when you are eating and drinking. This helps your speech pathologist see how food and drink travel through your throat and whether any material enters your airway.

### What are the benefits of a VFSS?

A VFSS allows your speech pathologist to investigate what is happening when you swallow. It informs recommendations that can improve your swallow function and safety. Recommendations may:

- Identify food and drink that are safer or easier to swallow
- Identify exercises that would help improve your swallow
- Identify any strategies, that could make swallowing safer or easier
- Guide decisions about your eating and drinking



### Why do you need a VFSS?

Your speech pathologist has recommended a VFSS as you may have difficulty swallowing food and drink. A VFSS can be indicated for many reasons. Some examples are:

- To determine if food or drink is going down the wrong way (i.e., into your airway)
- Feeling food, drink or medication getting stuck in the throat
- Choking, coughing or regurgitation when eating & drinking
- Frequent chest infections with no clear cause

### What happens during a VFSS?

1. You will be asked to sit in a chair in front of the x-ray screens
2. You will then be given several types of food and drink to swallow. The type of food or drink provided will be decided by your speech pathologist and will depend on the swallowing difficulties you are experiencing
3. The food and drink will be mixed with barium or omnipaque. These are safe to ingest and allow the food and drink to be seen on the x-ray
4. Under the guidance of your speech pathologist, x-ray videos will be taken while you swallow the food and drink

# VIDEOFLUOROSCOPIC SWALLOW STUDY (VFSS)

## A patient's guide

### What happens after the VFSS?

Results and recommendations are typically provided once your x-ray images have been analysed by your speech pathologist. They will discuss the results with you. These results will also be provided to your doctor.

### What are the risks associated with a VFSS?

A VFSS requires a small amount of x-ray radiation. The team will ensure that you are exposed to the smallest amount of radiation necessary. If you would like to know more about the exposure of radiation during your VFSS, please speak to your speech pathologist or doctor.

### Do I need to prepare anything?

No. Eat, drink, and take your medication as you currently do. If you use specialised feeding equipment at home, please bring these with you (e.g., spoons, forks, cups, etc.). Please let your speech pathologist know prior to your VFSS, if you have any allergies or intolerances.

### What to wear?

There is no need to undress. However, you will be asked to remove all head and neck jewellery upon arrival. A gown may be provided to wear over your clothes. If you have dentures, please bring them to your appointment. If practical, please also wear a T-shirt with no collar and no buttons.

### Who will be there?

- Speech pathologist(s)
- Radiologist
- Radiographer(s)
- Nursing staff

### How long will it take?

This varies from person to person. Typically, the VFSS appointment will take 10 to 30 minutes.

### How to get there?

Level 3, Medical Imaging, Ned Hanlon (Green) Building, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

