How to get there:

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Queensland Government

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VIDEOFLUOROSCOPIC EVALUATION OF SWALLOW (VFSS)

Patient Information Brochure

Queensland Government

What is a VFSS?

A Video Fluoroscopic Evaluation of Swallow (VFSS) is a moving x-ray picture that shows the movements of your mouth and throat during swallowing. It helps to identify problems with your swallowing and strategies to make eating and drinking easier and safer.

Please note: A VFSS is a different procedure from a Barium Meal/Swallow.

Why is a VFSS performed?

VFSS is recommended when there is concern about how you swallow, how well food moves from the mouth into the oesophagus (food pipe). A VFSS also allows for the planning of treatment for swallowing disorders. A VFSS may be considered if some of the following symptoms occur:

- feeling of food sticking in the throat after swallowing
- frequent choking
- coughing during meals
- gurgly breathing/voice quality during or after meals
- chronic respiratory problems
- difficulty swallowing

What happens during the procedure?

1. Prior to the procedure you will be asked to take off your jacket and any jewellery that may affect the view of the x-ray image.
2. You will sit in a chair or stand for the procedure and you will stay as still as possible throughout the procedure.
3. A small amount of barium (a chalky, white, radio-opaque liquid) is mixed with a variety of appropriate foods and drinks. The barium helps to outline the food and fluids more clearly on the x-ray picture.
4. The speech pathologist will ask you to eat a range of different foods and/or drinks while the x-ray image is being recorded.

What happens after the procedure?

The procedure is recorded so that it can be analysed. The speech pathologist will be able to discuss some preliminary results with you after the study. The speech pathologist will prepare a report describing your swallowing function. A radiologist will also report on your swallow function. These reports will be given to your doctor.

The results of the VFSS will help guide appropriate swallowing therapy and intervention.

How long will it take?

This varies for each person. You should expect the procedure to take at least 30 minutes.

Do I need to fast for the procedure?

No fasting is required for the VFSS.