

Paediatric Barium Meal/Swallow

An information guide



Paediatric Barium Meal/Swallow

What is a Barium meal/ swallow?

A barium meal/swallow is an x-ray investigation to look at your child's food pipe from their mouth to stomach and to see if the food stays there.

Who performs your investigation?

A children's radiologist will carry out this investigation assisted by a radiographer.

Children's radiologists are doctors specially trained to interpret the images and carry out more complex examinations in children.

They are supported by radiographers who are highly trained to carry out x-rays and other imaging procedures.

Are you required to make any special preparation?

Your child must not have anything to eat or drink for **3 hours** before the appointment.

What does the investigation involve?

Once you and your child have arrived in the x-ray department the investigation will be explained to you and you will help your child change into an x-ray gown. You and your child will then be taken into the x-ray room and you will stay with your child throughout the procedure.

Your child will be asked to drink a colourless liquid called Omnipaque to start with. This is an iodine based "dye" which shows up on x-rays. Then they may be asked to drink Barium solution through a straw or feeding cup.

Barium is a white liquid which is quite chalky and some children do not like the taste. It shows up on the x-ray images inside the food pipe and stomach. Some doctors may flavour the barium. We may need to give the contrast into the mouth via a syringe, rather like giving calpol etc.

Your child will be moved into different positions whilst on the x-ray table or if your child is old enough, they may be asked to sit up or stand up whilst the x-rays are being taken. If your child is older they may be asked to eat some biscuit coated in the barium.

As a parent you may be asked to wear a lead coat throughout the procedure to protect yourself from the x-rays. If there is any possibility of you being pregnant you need to inform the radiology staff in the room with you. This examination does involve using a small amount of radiation. This dose is kept to a minimum to reduce the risks to yourself.

The radiologist will explain the investigation to you and may be able to explain what he has seen on the x-rays images. However there are a lot of images taken and it might be necessary to look at them all closely before making a decision about what they show. You may ask questions at any time during the investigation.

How long does the investigation take?

The investigation takes about 30 minutes.

Are there any risks to the investigation?

Your child will be exposed to x-rays (ionising radiation) but this will be minimal. We are all exposed to ionising radiation every day and particularly when flying on aeroplanes.

Girls of 12 years and older will be asked for the first day of their last period to ensure that they are not pregnant.

Are there any after effects?

Your child's poo may be white for a few days whilst the barium works its way through. Your child can eat and drink as normal following the investigation and it is best for your child to drink plenty of fluids.

What to bring with you

If your child is still bottle feeding or uses a 'sippy' cup could you please bring these with you. We will fill it with the barium to make it easier to drink.

How do you get the results of your investigation?

The results of the investigation will be sent to the consultant that referred you for the investigation.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your investigation please contact the radiology booking centre on **0161 778 2233**.

Notes

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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