

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Having a barium swallow/meal

Your doctor has advised you to have a barium swallow/meal. This leaflet aims to explain what will happen and answer frequently asked questions.

This examination usually takes place in the morning. We will ask you to drink a white chalky fluid containing barium sulphate, which coats the oesophagus and stomach so as to show them on x-ray images. We may also give you fizzy ingredients to create gas in the stomach.

We obtain some or all of our images with you in a standing or sitting position. Depending on the question your doctor has asked, we may also need to obtain images with you lying horizontally.

The duration of the examination varies but in most cases it takes no longer than 10-15 minutes.

Before the examination

Your stomach needs to be empty for us to obtain the best results, so we ask you not to eat or drink for the four hours immediately before your appointment.

We will usually ask you to change into a hospital gown, although this is not always necessary.

Please leave any valuables at home. You are responsible for all personal items you bring into the hospital and the Trust cannot accept responsibility for their loss or damage.

After the examination

You may eat and drink normally. The barium is not absorbed by the body and makes its way out through the bowel over the next few days, so you might notice a whiter stool than normal.

If you have diabetes

We can usually arrange an appointment early in the day if you let us know. Usual advice is **not** to take your morning insulin or diabetic tablets (such as metformin) but to bring them with you to take after the examination. Please bring something to eat if you need it. You may also wish to seek advice from the person who usually looks after your diabetes.

Ionising radiation

This examination involves x-rays. We minimise your dose of x-rays so that the benefits of the examination outweigh the risks.

Results

The radiologist will study the images and will send a report to the hospital team (or GP) that requested the examination.

Contacting us

If you have queries you can contact the x-ray department on 01623 672202.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

We are available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, such as in large print, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know.

You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515 extension 6927.

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