

Radiology department

Information about your barium swallow examination

The purpose of a barium swallow is to examine the area from your mouth, down your throat and oesophagus (gullet) to your stomach. To see the stomach clearly, it is very important that it is empty. It is important to follow these instructions carefully. This leaflet explains what happens when you come for your barium swallow.

Before your barium swallow

- Do not eat or drink for the 2 hours before your appointment time. However you may take your medication as normal with a small amount of fluid.
- We will ask you to undress in a cubicle and give you a cotton gown to wear. (If you wish, you can bring your own dressing gown to wear over the cotton gown). You may leave your clothes in the cubicle. Take any valuables with you.
- You will be taken into the X-ray room and introduced to the radiographer who will be responsible for your examination. He/she will explain what will happen during the examination.
- A speech therapist and nurse may be present.

During your barium swallow

- We will ask you to stand or sit in front of the X-ray machine and give you a cup containing a small amount of fruit flavoured liquid. This is the barium. You may be given a small amount of food to swallow as well.
- The radiographer will tell you when to drink the barium and they will watch you on the TV screen.
- The radiographer will ask you to move and turn during the examination so that he/she can obtain clear images.
- A video recording of this may also be made if necessary.
- When the radiographer takes the X-ray images, they will give you clear instructions when to swallow.
- Some X-ray images will be taken when you are standing and some when you are lying down.
- The examination takes about 20 minutes.

After your barium swallow

- The X-ray images will be checked technically before you get dressed. So please be prepared to wait a short time.
- The radiographer will tell you when you can get dressed and leave.
- You can now eat and drink normally. If you are a diabetic you can bring some food to eat immediately after the examination.
- To help get rid of the barium after the examination, drink plenty of fluids and, if necessary, take a laxative.
- The report of your examination will be sent to the doctor or consultant who referred you.



Please come to the Integrated procedures unit (IPU) (department 2 - first floor) for this examination.

If you have any problems or questions about **this appointment**, please phone **0161 918 2346**.

If you have any questions or you wish to discuss any **problems about your barium swallow**, please contact us on the above number before you attend.

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **patient.information@christie.nhs.uk**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.

Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

