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# Barium Swallow and Meal Imaging Department



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## Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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## **What is a Barium Swallow and Meal?**

One way of looking at the oesophagus (the tube which leads from the mouth to the stomach), the stomach and duodenum is to swallow white liquid called barium which temporarily coat the inner walls of these structures allowing them to be seen on x rays.

The procedure can be modified to look at the oesophagus only.

## **What will happen?**

You will be asked to undress to the waist, remove jewellery and wear a hospital gown. The procedure is carried out in a fluoroscopy room under the supervision of a Consultant Radiologist.

You will be requested to drink barium which is a white liquid whilst the Radiologists watch on a TV screen.

Fluoroscopy allows the doctor to see a frequently updated picture of the inside of your gastrointestinal tract whilst keeping radiation to a minimum.

Pictures will be taken with you standing up and lying down.

## **How long will it take?**

The procedure usually takes about 10 minutes but may take up to half an hour.

## **What we ask you to do in preparation**

We ask you to have nothing to eat or drink for 6 hours before the procedure. This ensures that the stomach is empty when you arrive and allows the optimum examination of your oesophagus and stomach.

If you are diabetic you should contact the x ray department before carrying out these instructions.

## **Afterwards**

You will experience no serious side effects. Some patients suffer mild constipation but if you drink extra fluids for the following 2 days you should avoid this.

You may eat and drink normally as soon as you leave the department.

## **Results**

The Radiologist will study the pictures taken and send a report to the doctor who requested the examination.

You will need to make an appointment to see this doctor to discuss the findings if you have not already done so.

## **Are there any risks**

The radiation risk from this examination is equivalent to approximately 15 months of the natural background radiation we all receive.