

Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study (VFSS)

A VFSS is a moving x-ray of swallowing. It shows the movements of your mouth and throat during swallowing.

Why is a videofluoroscopy performed?

A VFSS is recommended to obtain information about your swallow function that cannot be observed through a normal swallowing assessment. This procedure allows your speech pathologist to view the anatomy and physiology of your swallow while you eat and drink and see if any food or drink gets stuck, is left over in parts of your mouth and throat or if it goes down the wrong way (aspiration).

The reason for conducting a VFSS is specific to each person but some common reasons could be to:

- Assist in determining the safest food textures and fluid consistencies that can be swallowed.
- Observe the exact passage of food and drinks and detect if any foreign material enters the airway.
- To view how well the muscles and structures in the mouth and throat are working during the act of swallowing.
- Diagnose the reasons behind the swallowing difficulties to allow the appropriate intervention to be selected.
- Trial swallow strategies or manoeuvres that may improve swallow safety or efficiency.
- To measure any changes in swallow function as a direct result of swallow rehabilitation.

What happens during the procedure?

1. You will sit in a chair and be given different liquids and foods to swallow whilst the x-ray is on. The radiographer and speech pathologists will ensure you are in the right position for the x-ray.
2. The food or drink is mixed with a small amount of barium sulphate (a sweet flavoured, radio-opaque liquid). This is safe to ingest and helps to outline the food and fluids more clearly on the x-ray image.



What happens after the procedure?

Your speech pathologist will discuss the results with you and use these results to guide the management of your feeding or swallowing difficulties.

How long will the procedure take?

This varies for each person. However, you can expect the procedure to take approximately 30 minutes.

Is any special preparation required?

No preparation is required for the assessment – no fasting or changes to diet. If possible, remove all jewellery prior to the assessment and notify the speech pathologist of any allergies or food intolerances.

How do I pay for the procedure?

If you are an NDIS participant, the procedure will require five hours of speech pathology funding and an out-of-pocket cost charged by the radiology clinic on the day. The out-of-pocket amount will be reduced if you have a Healthcare Card.

For more information call **1300 13 16 19**
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