

Why does your child need a VFSS?

Your doctor or health professional may refer your child for a VFSS if they are concerned that your child is:

- Experiencing frequent respiratory infections
- Having difficulty swallowing food or liquid on a regular basis
- Frequent report of coughing/choking during meals

The results of the swallow study are used to make recommendations about:

- Food textures and liquid consistencies your child can handle best
- Strategies to can assist your child to eat and drink safely
- Therapeutic interventions that may improve your child's feeding and swallowing skills

If your child has severe difficulty swallowing or is at high risk of food or liquid going into their lungs, alternative feeding options may need to be considered. This recommendation would be discussed with you and your child's medical team.



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Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study (VFSS)

Information for Parents and
Caregivers



Date: _____ Time: _____

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What is a Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study?

A Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study (VFSS) is a video x-ray that is used to see how your child coordinates the muscles in their mouth and throat for swallowing.

Using x-ray, we can see how well the food and liquid travels from the mouth to the esophagus. We can also assess how well the airway is protected during swallowing. Airway protection is important so that food and drink does not go down into the lungs.

The speech-language pathologist (SLP) may try to help your child swallow better by using different cups, bottles, straws or a syringe. Additionally, the SLP may also make modifications to the food/liquid your child is eating by making the liquid thicker or the food smoother.



Who are the Team Members Involved?

- Parents/Caregivers
- Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP)
- Medical Doctor
- Radiology Technician

If your child sees an SLP in the community for therapy, please let them know about this appointment and invite them to accompany you and your child to share information and hear the results of the test.

What do I bring?

- Food and drink that your child likes and eats/drinks well
- Food and drink that you feel is more difficulty for your child to manage
- The utensils that your child currently eats/drinks with e.g own spoon, bowl, bottle, or cup.

What do I do before the VFSS?

Your child should not eat or drink for 3 hours before the MBS. Please leave enough time to find parking so that you are not late for your appointment.

What about Radiation?

During the VFSS you will be required to wear a lead apron to protect you from x-rays. A small lap apron will be placed on your child for additional protection. If you are pregnant, may be pregnant or breastfeeding you cannot be present during the VFSS and must wait outside until the study is completed. In this case, you can bring someone else who can be with your child during the study.

What happens during a VFSS?

1. You will arrive at St Mary's Hospital for Children and proceed to the ground floor to the Outpatient Rehabilitation Center.
2. The SLP and PA/NP will meet with you to review the intake form and go over any concerns you have regarding your child's feeding/swallowing.
3. The SLP will mix the foods and liquids you brought from home with a milky material called barium that will make the food and drinks show up on the x-ray as your child is swallowing. You may want to explain to your child that the barium will change the taste and appearance of the food and liquid.
4. To ensure the best position for swallowing during the x-ray your child may be seated in a supportive chair or in their own seating system, if applicable.
5. You will be asked to participate in the study by offering your child food and drink.
6. The SLP and PA/NP will review the x-ray. The results and any recommendations will be discussed with you immediately afterwards. On occasions, recommendations may first need to be discussed with your child's doctor.