

Videofluoroscopy Swallowing Assessment

VFSA



What is a swallowing disorder?

Normal swallowing involves complex and coordinated movements of many muscles to break down food and move it from your mouth to your stomach.

A swallowing disorder occurs when there is muscle weakness or a problem with muscle coordination. There may also be a loss of sensation in the mouth or a change in the anatomy of the mouth and/or throat.

Signs and Symptoms of swallowing disorders include:



Coughing



Choking



Drooling



Difficulty chewing



Poor oral hygiene



Taking a long time to eat



Food sticking in the throat



Unintentional weight loss



Medical complications



Recurrent pneumonia

What is a VFSA?

A videofluoroscopic swallowing assessment, also known as a cookie swallow test, is a specialized video x-ray used to assess swallowing difficulties.

What to expect

During this test, you will be seated in an x-ray machine and will be given food and drink mixed with barium. When ingested, the barium allows the speech language pathologist to see the food and drink as they travel from your mouth to your stomach.



Contact Information

Niagara Falls Hospital
905-378-4647
x53751

Marotta Family Hospital
905-378-4647
x46270

Welland Hospital
905-378-4647
x33392

niagarahealth

Videofluoroscopy Swallowing Assessment (VFSA)

What should I expect on the day of the test?

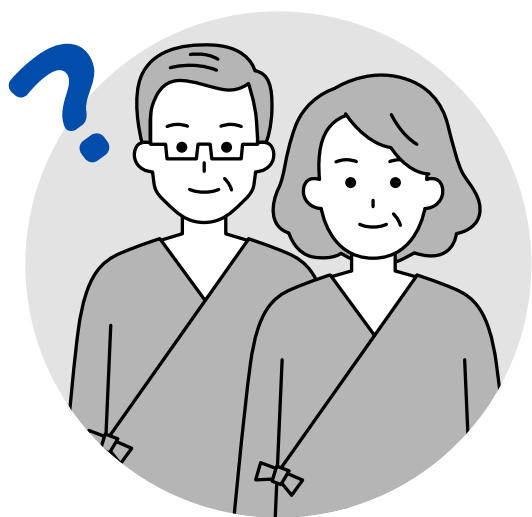
- You **CAN** eat and drink before the test. No need to fast. You can take your medications as usual before the test.
- Bring your health card.
- Please wear any dentures or dental partials
- Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment so you can be registered.
- The test will last from 15 to 30 minutes.
- If you are already a patient in the hospital, a porter will bring you down for your test – you do not need to register.

During the test

- The Speech Language Pathologist will perform this test with the assistance of radiology technologists. The Radiologist will review the test after it is completed.
- There will be **NO** tube/scope inserted in your throat. (The test only involves swallowing food mixed with barium).
- Views of your swallow may be taken from a side and front view.
- If you have difficulty sitting in a regular chair, you may be asked to sit in a swallow chair that has Velcro belts, and arms for extra support.

After the test

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- It is normal for your stool (poop) to have a whitish colour for up to three days after the test.
- Let your doctor know if there is a change in bowel habits.
- A report prepared by the Speech Language Pathologist and Radiologist will be sent to your physician.



What will I learn from this test?

This test may indicate where and why you are having problems with swallowing and will allow the Speech Language Pathologist to suggest what you can do to help with the problem.

These suggestions may include:

- Learning exercises to strengthen swallowing muscles.
- Learning techniques to increase swallow safety.
- Learning to change the textures of your food.
- Avoiding certain foods or drinks.

Contact Information

Niagara Falls Hospital
905-378-4647
x53751

Marotta Family Hospital
905-378-4647
x46270

Welland Hospital
905-378-4647
x33392

niagarahealth