

Division of Imaging

## Information for Carers/Patients

# Paediatric Barium Follow Through

## What is a Barium Follow Through?

A barium follow through examination is used to show your child's oesophagus (food pipe), stomach and small intestine.

## What do I need to do before bringing my child to hospital?

To ensure good quality images, your child should be starved for four hours prior to the test. If your child has a favourite bottle or beaker cup you may like to bring it with you. We give older children a cup and straw.

## What will happen in the hospital?

Your child will usually need to put on a hospital gown but may keep their underwear on. Baby clothes with poppers will need to be removed. Older children may prefer to keep their own T-shirt on; however, this must be plain. You may like to bring a spare in case of spillages.

You and your child will come into the examination room. Your child will usually be asked to drink barium.

Barium is a harmless thick, white liquid that shows up very well on X-rays. We often add milk shake flavourings, your child can choose a flavour. The test is mainly to look at the small bowel (intestine) but the Radiologist (X-ray Doctor) will usually have a look at the oesophagus (food pipe) and stomach while your child is drinking. You will be able to see the pictures on the TV screen.

After your child has drunk the barium liquid you will both be asked to wait outside to give the barium drink a chance to make its way through to the small bowel. We will bring you back into the room at intervals to take pictures.

When the barium has reached the large bowel, the Radiologist will take some extra pictures and may need to press gently on your child's tummy to get better views.

You will need to wear a protective apron if you stay with your child during the investigation.

## Will my child feel any pain?

You cannot feel x-rays, so the procedure itself is painless.

However, it is important to get you into the correct position. Holding this position / lying on a table may, for some people, feel uncomfortable.

## Are there any risks with this examination?

### Radiation risk

Everyone is exposed to ionising radiation (for example from gamma rays from space, air travel, natural radiation from the ground) all the time. This is one of the causes of cancer and other illnesses. This test will give your child a small extra dose of ionising radiation. Your doctors have taken this into account when asking your child to have this test and believe that this the best test for your child.

Children of 12 years and over will be asked to tell us the first day of their last menstrual period so that we can avoid giving radiation to an unborn baby unless it is absolutely necessary. This is because the risk is slightly greater for unborn children.

You can get more information about the risks and benefits of X-rays from [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk). Go to the homepages and search for 'X-rays'

### Contrast risk

We will need to give you contrast dye to make areas of your body show up more clearly.

The radiographers will complete a checklist to ensure it is safe for you to have the dye and you will be asked to sign this form as a consent, the specific side effects are documented on the checklists that you complete.

The contrast dye that is sometimes used can cause allergic reactions however the staff available will be checking for any risks before we proceed.

## Do I need to give my permission (consent)?

The radiologist will ask you if you are happy for the examination to go ahead. This is called verbal consent.

If you do not wish to have the examination or are undecided, please ask the radiologist so that they can answer any questions you may have.

Remember, it is your decision. You can change your mind at any time and your wishes will be respected.

However, not having the examination may delay your diagnosis as the referring clinician may not have all the needed information.

## How long will it take?

This test usually takes between one and three hours, but this may be variable and, in some cases, can take up to six hours. It is advisable to bring either a book or some distraction for your child.

## What happens after the test?

Your child can eat and drink straight after any barium test and should drink plenty of fluids for the next 24 hours as barium can sometimes cause constipation. In all children barium may be visible in the bowel motions for up to two days.

## When will I get my results?

The radiologist performing the examination may be able to give you a provisional result of the test but often the images are reviewed with other tests your child may be having, in which case a final report will be sent to your referring Consultant in 2-3 weeks.

The results of the investigation will be discussed with you at your child's next appointment with the Consultant or they may write to you about the results.

## What should I do if my child has a problem?

If you feel your child's condition has changed, or you need further medical advice before receiving the results/after leaving the hospital, please make an appointment with the doctor that referred your child, or in an emergency, go to your nearest Emergency Department (ED).

## How can I provide feedback for the appointment my child has attended today?

The Division of Imaging welcomes feedback from all our patients. We actively take part in the Friends and Family Test, and we complete a patient experience questionnaire every month to obtain feedback on the experiences you have had. Please speak to a member of staff regarding the feedback or there are posters within the department with QR codes so you can complete these online.

## Contact us

For contact information please refer to your appointment letter or if you are an inpatient, please direct your queries to one of the medical staff on the ward

### Language and accessible support services:

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

### Your comments and concerns

If you would like to provide feedback, you can:

- Ask to speak to the department lead / manager.
- Write to us: Patient Advice and Liaison Services, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Cobbett House, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9WL.
- Log onto the Patient Opinion website [www.patientopinion.org.uk/](http://www.patientopinion.org.uk/) click on 'Tell your Story'

### If you would like to discuss a concern or make a complaint:

Ask to speak to the department manager – they may be able to help straight away. Inpatients can speak to a senior nurse or manager by contacting the Tell Us Today service on (0161) 701 1999.

Contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (0161) 276 8686 email: [pals@mft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@mft.nhs.uk). Ask for our information leaflet.

We welcome your feedback so we can continue to improve our services.

### NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

Telephone: 111, 24 hours a day

Website: [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)

## Finally

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Further information can be obtained by contacting the radiology department that is performing the procedure.