

Videofluoroscopic Swallowing Study (VFSS)

What is a VFSS?

A VFSS is a test to look at how your child swallows foods and liquids. We make an X-ray “movie” of your child’s mouth and throat while they are drinking and eating.

A speech-language pathologist (SLP) will work with you and your child. We will ask about your child’s medical history and feeding experience. An occupational or physical therapist may also be there during the study. The SLP will make recommendations right after the test, but you may need to check with your child’s doctor before making any changes in your child’s diet.

How can I prepare my child?

It is important that your child arrive hungry and ready to eat. This means not feeding your child for at least 2 hours before your scheduled visit. If your child has a feeding tube, you may need to hold or turn off feedings for at least 2 hours before your scheduled visit.



It is easiest if your child wears clothing without snaps on the neck or shoulder.



What happens during the study?

During the VFSS, your child will sit next to the X-ray machine in their normal position for eating. We will give your child a variety of foods and liquids, depending on their age and feeding experience. We will add a small amount of dye (barium) to the foods and liquids. This allows us to see the foods and liquids on the X-ray as they move through your child’s mouth and down their throat. The dye is harmless, but sometimes it causes mild constipation after the study.

What should we bring with us?

Bring the bottles and nipples, sippy cups or other special feeding items that your child uses at home.

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We have many kinds of liquids and foods for the study. These include common formulas such as Enfamil and Similac, apple juice, applesauce, pudding, soft cookies, rice crispy treats and Doritos chips. If you know your child prefers different liquids and foods, has food allergies or is on a special diet, please bring your own liquids and foods. Remember we will add dye to what you bring.

Who can be with my child during the study?

Women who are or may be pregnant cannot be in the room with the child while the X-ray machine is on. If you cannot be with your child, please bring another adult that your child is comfortable with so that they can help feed your child.

Siblings or other children under 12 are not allowed in the X-ray room. If siblings must come with you, we have a supervised play room where they may stay during your child's procedure.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Speech and Language Services (206) 987-2104
- Your Child's Health Care Provider

Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health-care provider.