

# Evaluating VPD in Your Child

This handout explains how we evaluate your child for VPD. VPD stands for velopharyngeal dysfunction. When a child has VPD, their soft palate does not contact their throat when they talk causing air to escape through their nose. The evaluation helps us see if your child has VPD and how it might be treated.

## How is VPD evaluated?

We will see your child for 1 to 3 appointments which may include:

### Perceptual speech evaluation



At this appointment, a speech language pathologist (SLP) will carefully listen to your child's speech. This is done to understand all of your child's speech issues and to make sure they can make enough speech sounds for other tests that may be needed.

The evaluation takes place in the Speech and Language Clinic and lasts 30 to 60 minutes. This appointment needs to be done before the other appointments described below. Sometimes this appointment will be scheduled on the same day as the other appointments.

### Nasendoscopy



This exam is done if the SLP feels your child may need surgery or a speech appliance to help their speech and your child is able to make enough sounds for the test. During the nasendoscopy, an otolaryngologist will place a small scope in your child's nose while your child repeats words and phrases. This allows us to see the back of your child's throat to see how the velopharyngeal muscles are working. The exam will be recorded and reviewed with you.

The nasendoscopy takes place in the Otolaryngology Clinic and takes about 30 minutes. It will be scheduled after the perceptual speech evaluation, sometimes on the same day. We will discuss treatment options of your child's VPD with you at the end of this appointment.

## To Learn More

- Childhood Communication Center  
206-987-3853
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

## Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

### Video fluoroscopic speech study



This is a special moving x-ray of your child's throat that is done while they talk. It is for patients who are being considered for speech surgery or a speech appliance called an "obturator." The exam is done by a speech-language pathologist.

The study is done by putting barium drops in your child's nose. Then your child will sit in the x-ray booth and say words and phrases while a video camera using x-rays shows their palate and throat muscles moving.

This appointment takes place in Radiology and lasts about 30 minutes.

It will be scheduled after the nasendoscopy, usually on the same day. Sometimes we cancel this appointment based on information from the nasendoscopy.

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### What if I have questions?

For question about scheduling an appointment, please contact the Family Resource Coordinator at the Childhood Communication Center, 206-987-3853. For questions about the evaluation process, ask to speak to one of the SLPs that specialize in VPD.