

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?

- Do not feed your child for at least 2 hours before your scheduled visit.
- It is important for your child to arrive hungry and ready to eat.
- 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.
- Choose clothing without snaps on the neck or shoulder.
- Remove metal jewelry (necklaces, earrings) from your child prior to their VFSS if possible.



To Learn More

- Speech and Language Services 206-987-2104
- Your child's healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's 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.

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.

We will test liquids and or foods during the study. You may bring your own foods or liquids if your child has food allergies, is on a special diet, or has specific preferences. Remember we will add dye to what you bring.

Who can be with my child during the study?

You or another non-pregnant adult will come in the room to help feed your child while the X-ray machine is on. If you cannot be with your child, please bring another adult your child is comfortable with, so that they can help feed your child.

Siblings or other children under 18 are not allowed in the X-ray room. If siblings must come with you, we have a supervised playroom where they may stay during your child's procedure.

Seattle Children's Outpatient Clinic Sibling Playroom

Open Monday through Friday: 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m.

Bellevue Playroom

Open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.