

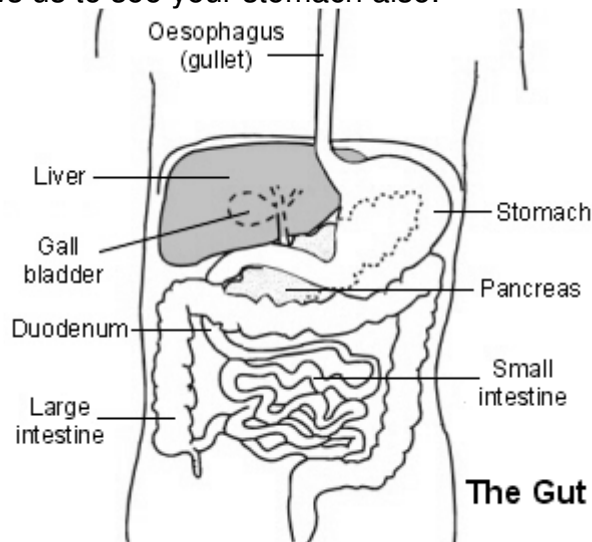
## Information for patients having a Barium Swallow / Barium Meal

**Please read all of this leaflet carefully**

### What is a Swallow / Meal?

A Barium Swallow is an examination to look at your oesophagus or gullet (the tube which carried food from your mouth to your stomach.)

A Barium Meal allows us to see your stomach also.



### Why has my Doctor sent me for a Barium Swallow /Meal?

Your GP or hospital consultant may have sent you for a barium swallow or meal for a number of reasons. Your symptoms may include difficulty swallowing, weight loss, a feeling of a lump in your throat or indigestion associated with reflux. This test will help to decide what is causing your symptoms.

### What preparation will I need?

It is essential that you do not have anything to eat or drink after 10pm on the evening before your examination. Do not have even a cup of tea, coffee or water. However, if your appointment is in the afternoon you may have one drink at 7am that morning.

### What if I am Diabetic?

If you are Diabetic, please telephone us to let us know so that we can arrange a morning appointment for you.

## Information for Patients

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### **What if I could be pregnant?**

If you are a female between the ages of 12 and 55 years, this examination must be performed within 28 days of the start of your last menstrual period. Please inform the department if your examination falls after this time or if there is a possibility that you may be pregnant?

### **Can I still take my medication?**

You must not take any white medicine for 24 hours prior to your examination. Please contact your GP to confirm that it is appropriate for you to do so.

### **What does a Barium Swallow / Meal involve?**

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown, leaving on only your underpants. You will be given a dressing gown, or you may bring your own from home if you prefer. You will then be brought into the x-ray room and asked to stand on a step on the table. You will be asked to swallow mouthfuls of a thick chalky liquid, while the Radiologist takes pictures. Sometimes you will be asked to swallow a spoonful of powder followed by a sharp tasting lemon liquid. This produces gas in your stomach which will give us better pictures. You may have to resist the urge to burp. You will be asked to move into a number of positions, both standing up and lying down. We will help you to do this if needed.

### **Who will be in the room?**

There will be a Radiologist or Radiographer in the room who will perform the examination. They will be assisted by a Radiographer and a Radiology Assistant, who will help to make sure you are comfortable. There may also be a student in the room, observing the procedure. However, if you are not happy to have a student present, you do not have to agree.

### **Will I be sedated?**

You will not be sedated for the procedure. It is important that you are awake in order that you may assist us.

### **What will the examination feel like?**

The liquid is very quite thick and chalky, which may make it difficult to swallow. The powder will create gas which will also be used to inflate your stomach. This will give you a 'windy', bloated feeling in your tummy.

### **Do I have to have an injection?**

We may give you an injection in your arm half way through the procedure. This is to relax your gullet. It does not relax you. The injection may affect your vision temporarily. If this does affect you, it will only last for about 15 minutes. However, you should not drive until you are sure your vision has returned to normal. You do not have to have the injection, but we advise that you do otherwise it may make it difficult to interpret your pictures.

### **How long will the examination take?**

The examination will take about 10 minutes.

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### Can I eat as normal afterwards?

Yes. However, the test can make you a little constipated, so we recommend that you eat plenty of fibre for the next few days.

### Will I notice anything different after the test?

For the next few days your stools will also be white, due to the barium. You may be constipated. This is quite normal. You should ensure that you continue to drink plenty of fluid and eat more fibre (bran flake, fruit and vegetables) for a few days after your test.

### When will I get my results?

If your GP has sent you for this test, the results will be returned to him / her. If you have been referred from a hospital consultant, the results will go back to him/ her and you will be contacted by them with a clinic appointment/.

### Where can I find more information?

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us on the following numbers:-

Birmingham Heartlands Hospital :- 0121 424 2451

Solihull Hospital :- 0121 424 5271

Good Hope Hospital: - 0121 424 9933

The following web site may also be helpful:-

The Royal College of Radiologists :-<http://www.rcr.ac.uk>

### Additional Sources of Information:

You can go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

You may want to visit one of our Health Information Centres located in:

- Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Tel: 0121 424 2280
- Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946

or contact us by email: [healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk](mailto:healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk).

### Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will always ask you for your consent if we need to use information that identifies you. We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

## Information for Patients

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### Dear Patient

We welcome your views on what you liked and suggestions for how things could be improved at this hospital. If you would like to tell us and others about your experience please make your comments through one of the following sites:-

- NHS Choice:- [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Patient Opinion:- [www.patientopinion.org.uk](http://www.patientopinion.org.uk)
- I want great care:- [www.iwantgreatcare.org](http://www.iwantgreatcare.org) (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)
- Radiology Website:- <http://www.heft-radiology.co.uk/Default.asp?page=443>

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about this hospital or how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the NHS Choice or Patient Opinion sites.