

## What will happen once it's over?

The Feeding Clinic team will meet with you to discuss the results. Based on the findings, recommendations will be made including what foods/drinks are safe for your child to eat and how to provide them safely. Occasionally we may need more time to further discuss in more detail. A follow up appointment will be recommended to review the outcome of the recommendations.

## What are the risks with this procedure?

The Feeding Clinic Team will make every effort to minimize the risks of the study and we will explain them to you. There is a risk of exposure to a small amount of radiation. If your child has a swallowing problem, it is possible that he/she may aspirate a small amount of barium.

## What do I need to bring?

- Food your child would typically eat and enjoy
- Drink your child would typically drink and enjoy
- Bottle/sippy cup/cup used at home
- Spoon used at home
- Bib or change of clothes

## What should I do on the day of the videofluoroscopic swallow study?

The study involves your child eating food and drinking liquid. Therefore, it is important that your child come hungry enough to eat and drink during the study.

Please bring some of your child's typical food and drink to the appointment. We may also want to test alternate food consistencies, which we will provide with your consent.

## About Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital is Canada's largest children's rehabilitation hospital.

Our vision is to create a world of possibility for kids with disability. We pioneer treatments, technologies, therapies and real-world programs that give children with disabilities the tools to participate fully in life.

Holland Bloorview serves about 7,000 children each year, with about 600 inpatient admissions and 58,000 outpatient visits. Holland Bloorview is a world-class teaching hospital fully affiliated with the University of Toronto. We train future health-care specialists in the field of childhood disability. The Bloorview Research Institute is located onsite, allowing us to integrate cutting-edge research and teaching with frontline care to improve children's quality of life.



**Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital**  
150 Kilgour Road, Toronto, ON M4G 1R8  
Tel: 416-425-6220 Toll-Free: 800-363-2440  
Fax: 416-425-6591 E-mail: info@hollandbloorview.ca

[552.11]

[www.hollandbloorview.ca](http://www.hollandbloorview.ca)

## Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study



**Holland Bloorview**  
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

## What is a Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study?

A videofluoroscopic swallow study (VSS) is a study that uses x-rays to look at how your child swallows. This study helps us to identify if there is a problem. We can then recommend more safe ways for your child to eat and drink.

Safe swallowing is where food or liquid moves from the mouth into the throat, down the food pipe (esophagus) and into the stomach. The food pipe and windpipe (trachea) are close together. Sometimes food or liquid can enter the trachea, or airway. This may be called aspiration or penetration of food into the airway. When this happens, your child may cough. Some children do not cough in response to this entry, often called silent aspiration. Entry of food and liquid into the lungs may cause illness, for example pneumonia, bronchitis, or lung damage over time.

## Why does my child need a Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study?

The VSS is used to further test some identified concerns about your child's swallowing safety. At your child's Feeding Clinic Assessment, their eating and drinking were observed. Some concern was noted with their swallowing safety. Your child's specific concerns were likely explained to you.

The VSS will help to clarify:

- The safest consistencies of food/liquid for your child to eat/drink
- The safest position for your child to sit in to eat/drink
- Equipment needed (e.g. cup, spoon)
- The safest pace of feeding

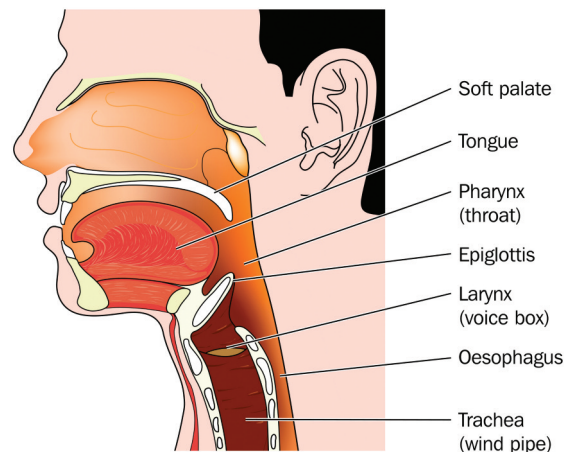
## What happens during a Videofluoroscopy?

During the VSS, a tracing material, usually barium sulphate, is mixed with the food/drink given to your child so that it will show up on the x-ray. We will examine the pathway that the drink/food takes. This has a mild flavour and chalky quality. It is usually masked by the flavour of food and drink.

Your child will be asked to sit next to the camera. He/She will then be transferred from their own supportive seating system/wheelchair into the feeding chair. This feeding chair will have head support and footrests. It may be different from your child's own supportive seating system/wheelchair. However, we will ensure that your child is well supported while eating/drinking.

During the study you will either feed your child or your child will be asked to feed themselves. It is important that your child eat/drink like they do during a regular mealtime. The x-ray camera will make a noise as it takes pictures. It may move up and down as it looks at different areas of swallowing. During the study we will be looking for the safest way for your child to eat/drink. We may make changes to:

- Your child's head/body position
- Food texture/consistency
- Food flavour
- Utensils used



## How long does it take?

First, your child will be positioned in front of the x-ray camera. We will watch swallows of different consistencies of food and /or liquid. We may make some changes to their position, the consistency of the food/liquid they are eating/drinking, and how they are eating/drinking. The study may take 10 to 30 minutes.

## Who will be in the room?

Usually, there will be a:

- Radiologist
- Paediatrician/Nutrition Specialist
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Radiology Technologist

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital is a teaching hospital. There may be additional professionals/students observing the study.

It is recommended that parents/caregivers feed their children or be in the x-ray room to help with self-feeding. The parent in the room will be required to wear a lead apron to protect from x-ray exposure. If the parent/caregiver is pregnant they will not be able to enter the x-ray room. Please bring another adult with you who is comfortable feeding your child. There is an observation area next to the x-ray room from where the study can be observed safely.