

# Your child is having a Barium Meal Study: Information for families

A Barium Meal Study is used to look at your child's oesophagus (the tube that carries food and liquids from the throat to the stomach), stomach and upper small bowel (the duodenum). Sometimes your doctor may ask for a 'follow-through' study as well. A follow-through study is used to look at the whole of the small bowel and the colon.

Both studies use 'X-ray Contrast', a liquid which shows up on x-rays. Your child can drink the fluid, or it can be delivered via their usual way of eating. This information sheet explains what is involved and what to expect.

## When you receive your appointment letter

If you are unable to keep this appointment, please inform the department as soon as possible.

If your child is likely to need a hoist during the appointment, please telephone us in advance so that we can make sure this is ready for you.

If you are pregnant or think you could be pregnant, please let us know. The x-rays used in the fluoroscopy scan could harm your unborn baby, so we would advise bringing another adult to come into the scanning room with your child.

## Before the appointment

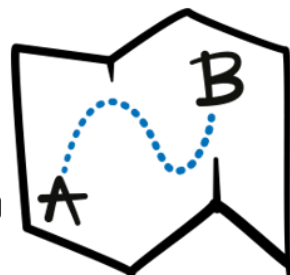
If your child is 12 years old or older and of childbearing potential, we will ask them about

their periods and any possibility that they could be pregnant; this is a legal obligation that we must ask.

The person bringing your child to the scan should have 'Parental Responsibility' for them. Parental Responsibility refers to the individual who has legal rights, responsibilities, duties, power and authority to make decisions for a child. If the person bringing your child does not have Parental Responsibility, we may have to cancel the scan.

## What to bring with you?

It can help if your child has a favourite toy to hold to comfort them during the study. Electronic devices such as phones or tablets are welcome.



If your child takes liquids orally, and has a favourite bottle, beaker or cup, please bring this with you.

If your child uses a gastrostomy for feeding, please bring a spare adaptor and tube with you. This is very important as we don't keep spare adaptors and tubes in the department.

You may wish to bring some spare clothes in case any of the contrast liquid spills.

## The day of the study

Your child should not have a feed for two hours before the study. This includes milk for those children eating solids. Clear fluids, such as water or weak squash, can be taken until one hour before the study.

Please arrive at the Radiology department at the time stated in your child's appointment letter.

If your child's clothes have any metal such as zips or buttons, these may need to be taken off before the study. If this is necessary, we will provide a hospital gown.

## The study

You are welcome to stay with your child throughout the study. Everyone staying inside the examination room will need to wear a lead coat.

Before we begin, your child may need to remove any metallic objects and wear a hospital gown.

Once on the x-ray bed, your child will be given the contrast liquid to drink. If your child has a feeding tube or gastrostomy, the doctor will use this to give the contrast liquid. We encourage you and your child to discuss how you would like the contrast to be given, with

the radiology team before the study begins. Your child will feel quite full after the contrast is inserted, as if they had had a full feed or meal.

We will take a series of X-ray pictures while the contrast is travelling through your child's bowel. You and your child will be able to see these on a screen by the bed.

If your doctor has asked for a follow-through study as well, we may need to wait for the contrast to travel all the way through the small bowel. Sometimes, this can take longer than expected. We may ask you to go for a walk and come back in a few hours' time for further pictures. We will let you know if this is the case.

## After the study

Once the study is complete, you are free to leave the Radiology department.

A report outlining the results of the study will be sent to the doctor who referred your child for this test. You will receive the results from your referring doctor once they have reviewed them.

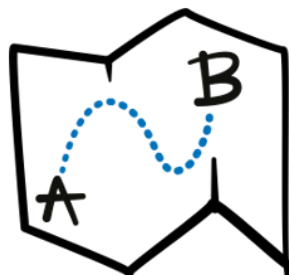
## When you get home

The x-ray contrast can occasionally cause constipation so please ensure your child takes sufficient fluids in the 24-48 hours after the study. to stay well hydrated.

The contrast usually comes out in your child's poo which may appear white or pale. This is normal and should clear in a few days.

## Are there any risks?

The contrast liquid will not interfere with any medicines your child is taking.



It may cause some constipation in the days that follow.

**It is our legal duty to tell you about the potential risk of having a fluoroscopy study (barium meal and follow through). The studies are only ever requested if the benefits outweigh the risks involved. The study does use radiation, but the dose is kept as low as possible. This is because the radiographers are specially trained to obtain the best quality pictures while using the lowest amount of radiation possible.**

**Anyone staying in the room with your child will need to wear a lead apron – this works as a barrier to radiation. We advise that anyone who is pregnant or thinks they might be pregnant should not go into the room.**

### Are there any alternatives?

Other types of imaging studies, such as MRI, CT or Ultrasound, can visualise the digestive system. It may be that this test is the best way to help your child. You should discuss this test with your child's medical team prior to the date of the study. The radiologist will also be available on the day of the study should you have further questions.

### Further information and support

If you have any questions, please telephone the Radiology department on 020 7829 8615, extension 0361.

### Your feedback

We take all feedback very seriously and want to hear about your experiences. Your feedback helps us to understand what we are doing well but importantly how we can improve. We will give you a feedback card but if you haven't received one, please ask a member of staff. You can also provide feedback using this QR code or via our website:



<https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/your-opinion-matters/>

### Any concerns?

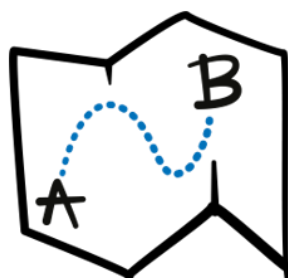
We know we do not always get things right. As explained above, please do raise any queries or issues with the ward staff in the first instance. We want to help and often we are able to resolve things quickly.

Another way of raising a concern is to contact our **Pals Office** – they are based in the main reception area and open from Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm. You can also call them on 020 7829 7862 or email [pals@gosh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gosh.nhs.uk). The Pals team can offer independent advice and support, working with you to sort out a problem along with members of staff.











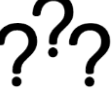
The **Complaints** team are also available if you want to make a complaint – you can call them on 020 7813 8402 or email [complaints@gosh.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@gosh.nhs.uk)

### Other information

If you require a copy of this information in a different format or language, please contact the Pals team for assistance.



## Having a Barium Meal Study

	You are coming to hospital for a scan to look at your throat, tummy and bowel.
	If you want us to explain anything again, please ask.
	Your special adult can come into the room with you. They will need to wear a lead apron.
	You may need to wear special hospital clothes.
	You will lie down on a bed with your special adult standing next to you.
	You will be given some liquid which will travel to your tummy. This liquid will show on your X-ray pictures.
	We need you to stay very still.
	When we have enough pictures, you can move again and get off the bed.
	If you are not having any other scans, you can go home.
	We will send a report of the scan to your doctors.
	Please ask us if you have any questions.

