

PATIENT INFORMATION

Fibreoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES) Clinic

You have been given an appointment to attend the FEES Clinic. This is a clinic coordinated by the Speech and Language Therapy Service. This information sheet provides you with some information about the clinic.

1. Why have I been given an appointment in the clinic?

You have been referred to the Speech and Language Therapy Department because you have had some difficulties swallowing or have had surgery or other treatment that may affect your swallowing. The Speech and Language Therapists are trained to assess and treat swallowing problems and some throat symptoms. The FEES clinic enables examination of your swallowing and your throat in detail. It also enables us to try different foods and/or different techniques if appropriate to help you swallow more effectively.

2. What happens in the clinic?

A team of two people will carry out the examination. This team will usually be made up of two speech and language therapists. Other members of staff, such as ear, nose and throat surgeon, a nurse or a dietitian may also be present.

You will be asked to sit in a comfortable chair, or if an in-patient you will be positioned upright in bed. A very small, flexible scope will be placed into one nostril and moved through your nose. When the end of the scope is positioned just beyond the back of the nose, a clear view of your throat is obtained. You will be able to see your throat (including your vocal cords) on the television monitor if you choose. You may be given some food and liquid to swallow. This is dyed with a small amount of blue or green food dye to enable a clearer view of your swallowing. Your swallowing will be observed and recorded onto a disc to enable analysis at a later time.

3. When will I know the results?

You will be given some basic feedback and advice immediately after the procedure. However, detailed results will only be available when a report has been written. The report will be sent to the doctor who referred you to the clinic and a copy will be placed in your medical notes.

4. Is the procedure safe? Is it uncomfortable?

The procedure is safe and has no side effects. At times the passing of the scope through the nose causes mild to moderate discomfort. Once the scope is positioned above the throat, any discomfort usually recedes. Discomfort can be reduced by the application of local anaesthetic to the nose prior to the scope being passed, although this is rarely necessary. The anaesthetic also widens the space in the nose, enabling the scope to be passed more easily.

If anaesthesia is required, a small cotton swab soaked in anaesthetic will be placed into the front part of the nose and removed before the examination. A spray is not used as this may numb your throat and alter your swallowing.

5. How long will it take?

The procedure takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Although the clinic generally runs on time, you may experience a small delay. Your patience in these circumstances would be appreciated.

6. Can I eat before my appointment?

Unless you have been advised otherwise, you can eat and drink as normal before your appointment. If you are currently feeding through a tube, you can take your feeds as normal up until your appointment time.

7. What happens afterwards?

You can return to the ward or go home immediately after the appointment. If appropriate, a follow-up appointment will be made for you to see the Speech and Language Therapist to discuss the results in more detail, and to give you further advice and exercises to make your swallowing easier. You may also have an appointment made for you to attend the outpatients' department.

If you have any questions about the clinic or the procedure, call the Speech and Language Therapy Department on 01626 324545.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.