

Modified Barium Swallow

Why is it done ? Modified Barium Swallow (MBS) is a fluoroscopic procedure designed to determine whether food or liquid is entering a person's lungs, also known as aspiration. It permits the medical team to observe the coordination of anatomical structures in the mouth and throat, as they are actively functioning when chewing, drinking and swallowing. It also identifies the reason for aspiration. Often times, this test is done after a patient has had a stroke and is having difficulty swallowing (dysphagia). The patient may cough or choke while attempting to swallow saliva, liquids, or food. A speech pathologist often assesses a patient's ability to swallow in order to determine the risk of aspiration, (food or liquid going into the lungs) which potentially may lead to a lung infection or pneumonia.

Stroke survivors are at risk for silent aspiration. Silent aspiration is when food and liquid enter into the lungs without any coughing or choking. In these patients, there are no outward signs or symptoms of a swallowing problem.

How to prepare: you may eat before your test

Please tell the technologist if you have an insulin pump.

What to expect during the test:

A speech pathologist administers materials (thin to thick liquid consistencies of Barium and solids as indicated) as the patient is seated upright in the lateral position. A radiologist and radiology technologist perform the fluoroscopy (a type of moving/live X-ray) to visualize the swallowing process.

There are many benefits from MBS. It enables the speech pathologist and the physician to identify more clearly the reason of dysphagia, rule out aspiration and make decisions regarding management of the patient's swallowing disorder. The speech pathologist needs a specific problem identified before swallowing treatment can be initiated. A treatment plan is developed for each patient specific to individual needs.

What to expect after the test:

- you can resume your usual activities and normal diet immediately.
- The results of your exam should be available to your physician within 24-48 hours after the test, Monday through Friday.
- Your physician will discuss the test results with you.