

## Fibreoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)

### What is a fibreoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing?

You have been given an appointment to attend the FEES swallowing clinic, where you will have a swallow assessment using a thin, flexible telescope (nasendoscope). The clinic is co-ordinated by the Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) and this information sheet provides you with some information about the clinic.

### Why do I need a FEES?

You have been referred to the speech and language therapy department because you have had some difficulties swallowing. You may also be having or have had treatments that affect your swallowing. The SLTs are trained to assess and treat swallowing problems and some throat symptoms. The FEES enables us to examine your swallowing and your throat in detail. It also enables us to try different foods and/or different techniques to help improve your swallow.

### What happens during the FEES?

The procedure is usually carried out by two SLTs. In some cases a doctor, nurse or physiotherapist may be present. It usually takes up to 30 minutes and can be carried out at your bedside or in the clinic. A thin, flexible telescope will be placed into one nostril and moved through your nose. When the end of the telescope is positioned just beyond the back of your 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 sometimes dyed with a small amount of blue or green food dye to allow the SLT to see what is happening when you swallow. This is recorded so the SLT can analyse it in detail at a later time.

### When will I know the results?

The SLT will be able to give you some basic information and advice immediately after the procedure. However, detailed results will only be available when a report has been written. The SLT will write the report after viewing the recorded images. The report will be sent to your Consultant and GP and a copy will be kept in your medical notes.

### Is the procedure safe?

The procedure is completely safe and rarely has side effects. When the telescope is passed through your nose, it may cause mild to moderate discomfort. Once the telescope is in position, any discomfort usually lessens.



### **How long will it take?**

The procedure takes up to about 30 minutes. For outpatients, the clinic generally runs on time, although you may experience a short delay. Your patience in these circumstances would be appreciated.

### **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.

### **What happens afterwards?**

You can return to the ward or go home immediately after the appointment as there are no side effects from the procedure. We may give you a follow up appointment to see the SLT. This is to discuss the results in more detail and to give you further advice and/or exercises to make your swallowing easier.

### **What will happen if I choose not to have the procedure?**

Your therapist will discuss with you why a FEES has been recommended. If you choose not to have the procedure, it means we are unable to advise you about different foods, drinks, techniques or therapy that could help improve your swallowing.

### **Is there an alternative procedure?**

There is another procedure your SLT may discuss with you (videofluoroscopy). This is a useful assessment but it provides different information about your swallowing to a FEES and it may not be appropriate for you.

### **Contact details**

If you have any questions about this procedure, you can either speak to the staff when you attend for your FEES, or you can call the SLT team Monday to Friday on:

Chelsea 020 7808 2815

Sutton 020 8661 3038

Alternatively, please call:

**The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline:** 020 8915 6899  
(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

