



Gastrostomy meal studies

This information sheet explains about gastrostomy meal studies, what is involved and what to expect when your child comes to Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) to have one.

What is a gastrostomy meal study?

A gastrostomy meal study is used to look at how your child's gastrostomy is working. It uses 'contrast', either a thick, white liquid called barium or a thinner clear liquid, both of which show up well on x-rays. The liquid is introduced to your child's digestive system through the gastrostomy. The contrast shows the position of your child's gastrostomy and how it is working. It is often suggested if your child has reflux or malrotation.

Are there any alternatives?

Various types of study such as CT, ultra-sound and x-rays can show the size and shape of your child's digestive system but now how it is working. The results of the study are used to plan your child's treatment.

When you receive your appointment letter

If you are unable to keep this appointment, please inform the department at least two weeks beforehand. Sometimes, we can offer the appointment to another child on the waiting list. As so many children and young people need to use our services, we have had to introduce a policy where if a child cancels or does not attend two appointments in a row, we will close their referral and inform their GOSH consultant.

The day of the study

Your child should not have a feed for two hours before the study. If they can drink fluids by mouth, your child should only drink clear fluids, such as weak squash or water until one hour before the study. This ensures that the images taken are of good quality. Please bring a spare adaptor and tube with you.

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

Legally, we are obliged to ask any girls over the age of 12 whether there is any chance they might be pregnant. This is to protect babies in the womb from receiving unnecessary radiation. We will also ask mothers or other female carers if they could be pregnant, especially if they are planning to come into the room with their child. If you are pregnant, we suggest you bring another member of the family with you, to be with your child during the study instead.

Your child will need to wear a hospital gown for this study but can keep a vest or t-shirt on underneath. You might want to bring some spare clothes in case any of the contrast liquid spills.



The study

You will be able to stay with your child throughout the study. The contrast liquid will be inserted into your child's gastrostomy using your usual feeding set and adaptor. Your child will feel quite full after the contrast is inserted, as if they had had a full feed. The doctor will take a series of pictures while the contrast is travelling through your child's digestive system. You and your child will be able to see the pictures on a screen by the bed. Usually this takes about 20 minutes.

After the study

When enough pictures have been taken, your child will be able to get off the bed and get dressed. If he or she is not having any further tests or studies, you will be free to go home. The radiology doctor will send a report about the study to your child's doctor.

Are there any risks?

The contrast liquid will not interfere with any medicines your child is taking. It may however cause some constipation in the days that follow the test so your child should drink plenty of fluids. Your child's faeces (poo) may appear white as the contrast is passing out of their body but this is quite normal. While x-rays use radiation, the amount in an individual set of pictures is low compared with the background radiation we get from the environment. Each x-ray is calculated so that the best picture can be taken using the minimum amount of radiation.

When you get home

Your child should take plenty of fluids for the next couple of days to flush the contrast out of their digestive system and prevent any constipation.

**If you have any questions,
please telephone the Radiology
department on 020 7829 8615**

Compiled by the Radiology department in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group
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