

SUBJECT: MODIFIED BARIUM SWALLOW STUDY	REFERENCE #8210
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	REVISED:

**DEFINITION:**

The Modified Barium Swallow Study (MBSS), also known as video-fluoroscopic swallow study, is a procedure for the assessment of dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) in patients.

**PURPOSE:**

Identify oropharyngeal dysphagia, and to examine a patient's response to treatment strategies

**CONTRAINDICATIONS:** (not all inclusive)

- Patient who is unstable, lethargic, agitated or uncooperative
- Patient who cannot be positioned correctly
- Patient with an allergy to barium

**POLICY:**

- The Speech-Language Pathologist shall work in collaboration with the Radiologist to determine if oral intake is safe for patients who have dysphagia.
- The Speech-Language Pathologist shall direct the order and sequence of food or liquid trials given during the study, as well as any treatment techniques or behavioral/postural changes with the approval of the Radiologist.
- The Radiologist shall operate the fluoroscopy equipment and verify the presence or absence of aspiration.
- The Radiologist shall terminate the exam at any time if the patient demonstrates a gross amount of aspiration, or if the patient clearly has no reflexive swallow or visible response to oral stimulation with food.

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**PROCEDURE:**

- Before the modified barium swallow test is performed, the Speech-Language Pathologist shall:
  - Identify the patient using two (2) patient identifiers
  - Ensure there is a signed consent
  - Explain the procedure to the patient
  - Obtain patient history, including:
    - Patient complaint of difficulty swallowing solids, liquids or a combination of these
    - Difficulty with only one type of food, i.e., rice, corn, peas
    - Excessive phlegm production or the feeling that something is “stuck” in the back of the throat
    - Feeling of obstruction right after swallowing
  - Obtain patient information regarding:
    - If the patient avoids any particular foods
    - If the patient has had any recent changes in overall health
    - If the patient has a history of respiratory infections
    - Any changes to his/her smell, taste
    - Any changes to food intake
    - Any problems with unplanned weight loss or dehydration
    - If extended time is needed to consume a meal
    - Other

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- Examine the patient’s oral cavity and other visible structures involved in swallowing
- Assess the patient for the presence abnormal speech or voice characteristics that might suggest a neurologic condition that could adversely impact swallowing
- Observe for signs of vocal hoarseness
- Observe for dysarthria or slurred speech
- Observe if the patient is having difficulty in voicing or managing his/her own saliva or secretions
- Position the patient upright as comfortably as possible, or in typical eating position"
  - Ensure the patient is adequately supported as needed.
  - This study may also be performed with the patient in side-lying, reclined, supine or standing, as appropriate.

Note: Typically the study is started with the patient in the lateral view

- Ensure the patient and healthcare providers in the procedure room are protected from radiation exposure, i.e., lead aprons.
- If needed, the Radiology RN shall administer oxygen via nasal cannula and monitor the patient’s vital signs and oxygen saturation during the study.
- The Speech-Language Pathologist shall feed the test swallows to the patient if the patient is unable to feed him/herself.
  - Bolus presentation should be guided by performance, aspiration risk, abnormalities and patient.
  - A representative sample of textures and consistencies shall be used to reach valid conclusions regarding the patient’s swallowing ability.
- All trial food or liquid items shall be mixed with an appropriate amount of either powdered, paste or liquid barium contrast (see manufacturer’s instructions).

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- The Radiologist shall obtain an initial image to check positioning of the patient.
- Fluoroscopy shall begin when the patient has been given the first test swallow by mouth.
- The patient should swallow within one (1) second of instruction.
- When the study is concluded, the Speech-Language Pathologist and Radiologist shall confer.
- The Speech-Language Pathologist shall:
  - Document the findings of the study in the patient's medical record
  - Explain the findings of the study to the patient and family, as appropriate
  - Make recommendations for patient to be seen for swallow therapy
  - Make recommendations for follow-up

**REFERENCES:**

- The American College of Radiology (ACR), *Practice Guideline for the Performance of the Modified Barium Swallow*, Amended 2014, <http://www.acr.org/~media/7D306289D61341DD9146466186A77DBE.pdf>
- National Institute of Health Author Manuscript, *The Videofluorographic Swallowing Study*, Bonnie Martin-Harris, Ph.D., SLP/BRS-S; Bronwyn Jones, MB, BS, FRACP, FRCR, Phys Med Rehabil Clin N Am. 2008 November; 19(4): 769-785, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2586156/>, last accessed May 2015
- GI Motility online, May 2006, *How to Perform Video-Fluoroscopic Swallowing Studies*, Gary D. Gramigna, M.S., <http://www.nature.com/gimo/contents/pt1/full/gimo95.html>, last accessed May 2015
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), *Guidelines for Speech-Language Pathologists Performing Videofluoroscopic Swallowing Studies*, 2004, <http://www.asha.org/policy/GL2004-00050/>