

Modified Barium Swallow Study (MBSS)

What is a Modified Barium Swallow Study (MBSS)?

A Modified Barium Swallow Study (MBSS) is a special x-ray that allows the Radiologist (who specializes in using x-rays) and Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) to identify why you are having trouble swallowing. The SLP is a professional who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of swallowing disorders and communication problems. During this test your mouth, throat and esophagus (which connects your throat to your stomach) is checked. The test will help you, your doctor, and the SLP plan what type of foods and liquids are easiest for you to swallow. The SLP also will identify positions and ways to help you swallow more easily and safely.

If you are pregnant, or think you might be, tell the radiologist or technologist BEFORE the x-ray is taken.

What will happen during the MBS?

A Radiology Technologist will take you into the x-ray room and may seat you into a special chair next to the x-ray machine; sometimes you will stand for the test. The SLP will give you different foods and liquids to chew and swallow. The food will be mixed with barium, a minty tasting liquid or paste. Barium allows images of your mouth, throat, and esophagus to be seen on x-ray. The SLP will tell you when to chew and swallow and the Radiologist will take x-ray pictures while you are swallowing. During the test, you may be asked to turn your head, sit back, hold your breath, cough or take small bites to help identify what makes it easier for you to swallow. Usually, you will drink a liquid and eat pudding, bread and a cracker. Other foods or liquids may be tried, depending upon your swallowing problem.

What will happen after the MBS?

The Radiologist and the SLP will review the results of the test to determine if and why you have problems with your swallowing. The SLP will discuss the results with the doctor who referred you for the test. Recommendations about what and how you should eat or drink will be made. The SLP will also review the results with you. You will be given an individual swallowing plan and any special materials you may need to help your swallowing problem, if indicated.

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Department of Speech Pathology, The Ohio State University Medical Center

To schedule an appointment please call 585-341-6785, option # 1