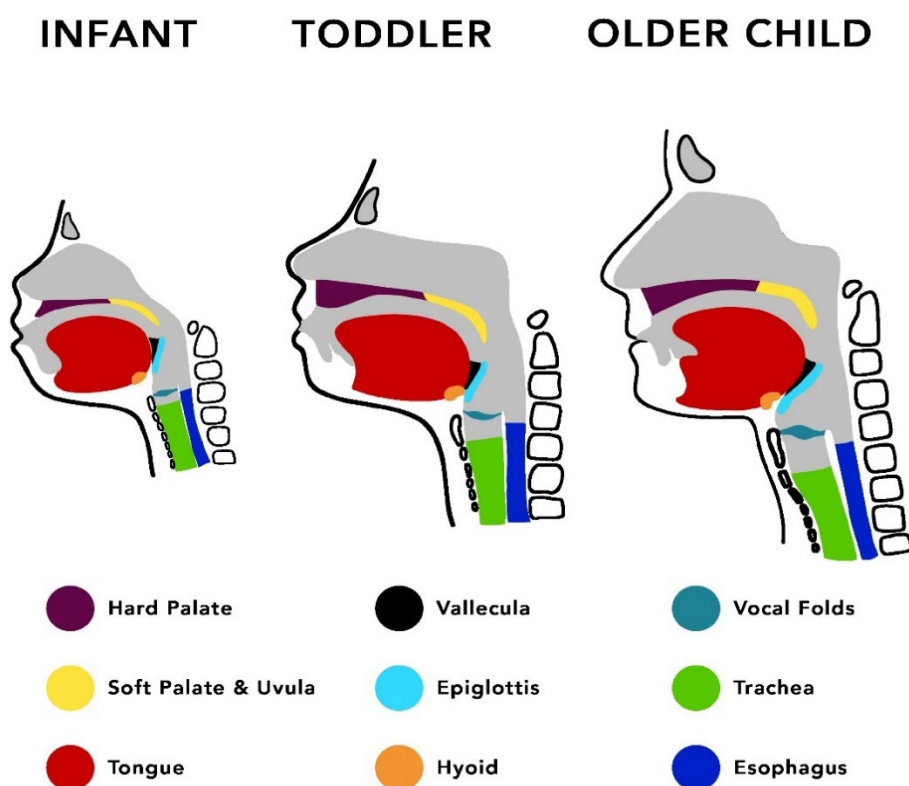


Preparing for a Swallow Study

What is a swallow study?

A **swallow study** is a non-invasive procedure that uses x-rays to look at your child's swallow. Both a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) and radiologist will be involved in this study. This picture shows the mouth and throat areas we'll be looking at, based on your child's age:



For more information, visit: [MottChildren.org/conditions-treatments/ped-radiology](https://www.mottchildren.org/conditions-treatments/ped-radiology)

How do I know if a swallow study is right for my child?

- If your child doesn't eat or drink anything by mouth, then they are not yet ready for this study. Please cancel and talk with their doctor about a referral for feeding therapy. Once your child can take 3-5 bites (or 5-10 millileters) by mouth, then they can do this study.
- If you and your child's doctor have no coughing, choking, or lung concerns about their eating or drinking, but you are concerned with your child being a picky eater or gagging on certain foods, then your child would be better for a feeding therapy evaluation. Please cancel their swallow study and talk with their doctor about a referral for feeding therapy.
- Be aware that a swallow study does not look at for your child's entire esophagus or reflux, and it cannot be used to make a diagnosis for these areas and concerns.

Who should join my child at the swallow study appointment?

- Only 1 caregiver can stay with your child during the swallow study. Pregnant caregivers, or caregivers who may be pregnant, will not be allowed to stay in the room with the child during this study because of the radiation (x-rays) involved.
- Siblings are not allowed to stay in the room during the swallow study. We suggest finding a separate caregiver for other children if possible, as we may not have staff available to watch them.

How do I prepare for my child's swallow study?

- If you'd like, you can pack games, books, or activities from home for your child to play with while you will be in the waiting room. You can also bring comfort items, a tablet or iPad, headphones, or pacifier from home for them to use during the swallow study.

- We ask that your child not eat or drink for 3 hours before their swallow study. It is okay to give them small sips of water and medications as needed.
- If your child is a picky eater, has food allergies, or has anxiety in medical settings like hospitals, please bring some foods, cups, or bottles they like from home. We will likely not use everything you bring, but we may explore using some of your home options to make the study easier for them.

Where will my child have their swallow study?

Your child's swallow study appointment will be at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, MI.

- You may park in the P4 or P2 parking structures and check in at the hospital welcome desk.
- Take elevator #6 to the 3rd floor. Check in at the Radiology reception desk.



- Your appointment information may say that your appointment is on the 12th and 3rd floor, but please ignore the information about the 12th floor. Both the SLP and radiologist will meet you on the 3rd floor.
- You will wait in the Radiology waiting room until you hear your child's name called.



- After your name is called, a radiology tech will walk you back to the swallow study room. This will be your room:



What can I expect during my child's swallow study?

- Once you are in the room, you will meet the SLP that will help with the swallow study. They will review your child's feeding history, hear your feeding concerns, and prepare food and drink for the study.
- After the SLP has reviewed this information with you, the radiology tech will help your child get into a chair. Your child will need to sit in a supported child's chair with a seatbelt or their home wheelchair by themselves. They can't sit on their caregiver's lap for this study.

- If your baby eats in a breastfeeding or chestfeeding side-lying position, they will lie down on a special table and not sit in the chair.
- Once your child is positioned, the radiologist will move the x-ray camera closer to them. It will make a few noises as it gets into position. The camera will not touch your child.
 - If your child is very sensitive to noise, they can wear headphones from home during the camera set-up.
 - If you stay in the room with your child during their study, we will ask you to put on a lead gown and thyroid shield to protect you from the x-ray radiation.
- We will ask your child to drink and eat small amounts of liquid or food mixed with **barium**, a white material that shows up on x-rays and allows us to see what's happening within your child's body as they swallow.
 - We will feed babies a bottle. We will give older children a drink from a cup or straw, a pureed (blended) food, and a hard solid food. We usually offer applesauce or pudding and an Oreo cookie. You are welcome and encouraged to bring in your own food that your child is familiar with.
 - If you are staying in the room for the study, you may feed your child. The SLP can help feed your child if you prefer to just watch and support them.
- We will record the x-ray videos of your child eating and drinking on the TV next to you in the room. The SLP and radiologist will review the recordings. Once their review is over, and if they don't need any more



videos, your child can leave their chair. The SLP will then review the study results and their recommendations with you.

- We will send the study results to you, your child's doctor, and the referring provider through the online patient portal (MyUofMHealth.org).
- The barium does not have any nutrition and does not count as a bottle for your baby, so your child will likely still be hungry after the study.

How long will the swallow study take?

- The swallow study is completed after your child takes a few bites and sips of food and drink. For infants, this is less than 1 ounce (oz) from a bottle, and for older children, this is a drink, a blended food, and a hard solid food. If your child is not agreeable to eating and drinking all of these, the exam may take longer.
 - Because of our office's appointment schedule and the need to limit their exposure to the x-ray radiation, we won't have time to try to give them many different foods.
- If we can't get your child to agree to eat or drink what is needed, we may end the study and talk about other test or therapy options. We will not force feed your child.

What if my child is on a ketogenic (keto) diet?

- Please contact your keto dietitian before coming to the swallow study. You can bring a keto-friendly puree (similar to applesauce or yogurt) and a keto-friendly chewable solid food to their study.
- Please talk with your dietitian about what to give your child after the barium, as barium is not part of a keto diet. Your child will likely eat or drink no more than 1 oz of barium.

Will I have a follow-up appointment after the swallow study?

If your child is younger than 3 years old, you may see another appointment on their schedule. This one is after the swallow study. If the swallow study shows that your child has a swallowing problem that needs therapy and a change in their diet, your child will go to this next appointment. It will be with a SLP on a different floor of the hospital, and the SLP will provide training on the diet recommendations.

- If your child uses breast milk or formula, please plan to bring 8 oz of this to the follow-up appointment. The milk or formula can be cold or warm.

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