

Speech Pathology Department - Outpatient Services

Flexible Endoscopic Examination of Swallowing (FEES) Outpatient Referral Forms and Procedure

Department	Email	Phone
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What is a Flexible Endoscopic Examination of Swallowing (FEES)?

Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES) is an instrumental assessment used to evaluate swallowing function and guide the treatment of swallowing disorders (dysphagia). This involves passing a nasendoscope through the nasal passage into the throat.

Why conduct a FEES?

- To define abnormalities in the pharyngeal or laryngeal anatomy and physiology relating to dysphagia symptoms
- To evaluate the presence and extent of aspiration
- To guide swallowing management, including safe swallowing strategies and diet/fluid modification.

What are the contraindications for FEES?

- Skull base fracture/surgery within last 6 weeks
- Facial fracture/surgery within last 6 weeks
- Sino nasal or anterior skull base tumour
- Life threatening epistaxis within last 6 weeks or history of severe epistaxis
- Trauma to nasal cavity due to surgery or injury within last 6 weeks
- Hereditary haemorrhagic telangiectasia
- Choanal atresia

Extra consideration may be required for certain conditions. Please call us to discuss if your patient has the following, as they may require ENT consult prior to Speech Pathology led FEES:

- Nasopharyngeal stenosis
- Craniofacial abnormalities
- Significant airway limitations (large volume disease/cancer)
- Severe movement disorder/agitation
- Vasovagal history
- Significant bleeding risks e.g. high amounts of anticoagulants

Referral Process:

- Outpatients require a medical referral requesting a "Flexible Endoscopic Examination of Swallowing"
- Treating Speech Pathologist to please complete the "FEES handover" below

Please note: Patients must be able to mobilise independently/transfer with minimum assistance into a standard chair or attend in a wheelchair, not a bed.

FLEXIBLE ENDOSCOPIC EVALUATION OF SWALLOWING – MEDICAL CONSENT

Patient name:	
Patient DOB:	
Patient address:	
Managing medical officer name:	
Contact:	
Facility:	

Provider Number:

Comments/requests:

By signing below, you have provided medical clearance for this patient to participate in a Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing procedure, completed by the Speech Pathology Team at Ryde Hospital.

Signature:

FLEXIBLE ENDOSCOPIC EVALUATION OF SWALLOWING – TREATING SPEECH PATHOLOGIST HANDOVER

Patient name:		MRN:	
Address:		DOB and age:	
Allergies/infections e.g. MRSA etc:			
Referrer name:		Telephone number:	
Email:		Facility:	
Reason for referral/swallowing concerns			
Medical and Social History:			
Premorbid function: <i>Usual diet and fluids. Usual communication/ cognition function</i>			
Interpreter needed?	<i>Y/N – language</i>		
Clinician/family member/carer to attend?	<i>Y/N – contact details</i>		
Reason for FEES: <i>What question are we trying to answer that cannot be answered at bedside?</i>			
Current function: <i>Swallowing/communication/ cognition</i>			
Cranial nerve assessment impairments			
Speech pathology hypothesis of dysphagia breakdown:			
Current mobility /transfers/ head control:			
Consistencies/ compensatory strategies to trial:			
Referrer Checklist			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact managing medical officer and confirm suitability for FEES assessment in writing (e.g: GP referral letter) 2. Explain the procedure to the patient and obtain informed consent (you can provide the attached handout). 3. Complete the referral form via e-mail to relevant email above. 4. Once paperwork is received, the patient will be triaged and booked into the clinic 			

Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)



What is it?

FEES is a procedure your speech pathologist can do to assess your swallow from the inside. It is used to see if food or drinks are going down the wrong way (into your airway) or getting stuck.

What does it involve?

- A thin, flexible tube will be inserted through your nose to the top of the throat.
- This tube is attached to a camera that displays the video of your throat on a computer screen.
- During the procedure, you will be given different textures of food or drink coloured with food dye. The dye makes it easier to see on the screen.
- You can watch a recording of the procedure if you would like.
- The speech pathologist will try to give feedback straight away.
- The video will then be reviewed before a formal report is written.

Is it safe?

The procedure is very safe, with minimal risk. The most common issue is a sneezing episode, and very few people experience a nose bleed.

It does not hurt, but it may be uncomfortable for a few seconds while the scope passes through the nose.

How to prepare?

- You can have a family member or carer with you if you wish.
- The test takes between 20 and 30 minutes
- You do not need to fast before the procedure.
- If you wear dentures or use special cutlery/cups, please bring them with you.
- A GP/medical referral is needed for outpatients only

Anatomy and Scope

