Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)

A fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing (FEES) test is a procedure used to assess how well you swallow.

During the procedure, a speech therapist passes a thin, flexible instrument, called an endoscope, through your nose. The endoscope has a tiny camera and light attached to it. This allows your therapist to view parts of your throat on a video screen as you swallow food and liquids.

The procedure often takes around 20 minutes. During this time, the speech therapist is able to identify the areas of your throat that are not working properly, the types of food/liquid that are safe for you to swallow, and also those consistencies that will place you at risk for choking or aspiration (a condition in which material enters the trachea/airway).

FEES is also used to determine strategies for improved swallowing safety such as postural adjustments or eating habits that may be trialed throughout the test.

What to Expect

There is nothing you need to do to prepare for the test. During the test, you will be seated and will eat a variety of foods and liquids in order to fully evaluate the swallow. While the scope is being passed through your nasal passages, most participants report feeling a pressure in the nose, but not pain. Once we are through the nasal passages, it is uncommon to have complaints of significant discomfort or pain. The test is tolerated well despite the apprehension that is typically present with the idea of the scope.

Candidates for FEES

Individuals with anatomical issues in the nasal passages may not be candidates for this test. Individuals experiencing hypernasal speech, food/liquid coming up through the nose, abnormal voice quality, or coughing and choking while eating would be excellent candidates for FEES. Additional reasons might qualify you for a FEES test.

There is nothing you need to do to prepare for the test. The procedure often takes around 20 minutes.

If you are experiencing issues related to swallowing, speak with your physician. You may benefit from a FEES test.