

# When your child is having a FEES

## What is a FEES?

**Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES)** is a procedure where a thin tube with a light and a tiny camera on the end is placed in your child's nose. This is called a scope. The scope is positioned at the back of the nose to provide a view of your child's voice box and throat while eating and drinking.

## What is the purpose of FEES?

A FEES allows assessment of your child's:

- nose, throat, voice box
- swallowing function and
- airway protection.

The camera in the scope takes a video while your child eats and drinks. The FEES team uses the video to assess your child's swallow and give you recommendations for how to feed your child safely.

## Who does the FEES?

FEES teams are often made up of:

- an otolaryngologist (also called an ear, nose, and throat specialist or ENT)
- a speech language pathologist (SLP) who has special training in swallowing
- a nurse, doctor, and/or respiratory therapist

## How long does the FEES take?

Your child's appointment will take about 15-30 minutes. The scope will be in place for a few minutes.

## Before the Appointment

- Please arrange childcare if you have other children; avoid bringing them with you if possible. There is limited space in the room. We ask that no more than two adults come with your child.
- If you or your child are sick, call to reschedule.

## Can I stay with my child?

Yes, if you are available and would like to stay you are welcome to.

## What do we need to do to get ready?

If possible, do not have your child eat or drink for at least 2 hours before the FEES appointment so they will eat during the test. Continue with any required medications as scheduled.

Depending on your child's age and feeding skills, bring:

- a drink (breastmilk, formula, milk, or juice)
- solid foods your child eats often
- solid foods your child finds harder to swallow
- utensils your child uses (cups, spoons, forks)
- bottle your child uses
- other bottles or nipples that you have at home

You may wish to bring a comfort item for your child, such as a stuffed animal, book, small toy, or pacifier. It may help your child to have this nearby before and after the procedure.

Contact your FEES team if you have questions about what to bring.

## When Your Child is Having a FEES | 2

### What happens during the FEES?

- Older children may sit on their own in a chair or wheelchair. Infants and toddlers may be swaddled and will be held and fed by you or a healthcare provider.
- The team might add drops of food colouring to your child's food or drink to make it more visible during the FEES.
- Your child may be given a nose spray, gel, or drops to numb their nose to make them more comfortable when inserting the scope.
- If your child has a nasogastric (NG) or orogastric (OG) feeding tube, this may be removed for the procedure.
- The ENT will put the long, thin scope in your child's nose and move it to the back of their nose. As your child eats and drinks, the scope records a video. The video is shown on a screen for the team to review. When the procedure is done, the scope will be removed.

### Does the procedure hurt?

Inserting the scope can be uncomfortable for a child. It is normal for a child to cry or fuss when the scope is inserted. Once in place, your child can eat and drink without discomfort.

### Are there any risks?

FEES has a low risk of complications. Complications have been reported in less than 1% of people. Possible complications during the FEES include discomfort, gagging, vomiting, and minor nosebleeds. These resolve quickly after the procedure.

### When are the results ready?

The healthcare team will review the results with you right after the procedure.

### What happens after the procedure?

Your child eats only a small amount during the FEES. If they are still hungry, they can eat more right afterwards.

Depending on the results of the FEES, your child may need a special feeding plan. The FEES team will make recommendations about the need for further assessment and treatment. They will work with you to develop a feeding care plan for your child.

### Questions?

If you have questions about this procedure, contact our FEES team. If you have any follow-up questions after the evaluation, contact the referring doctor.

### When your child goes for a FEES, this is what it will look like:

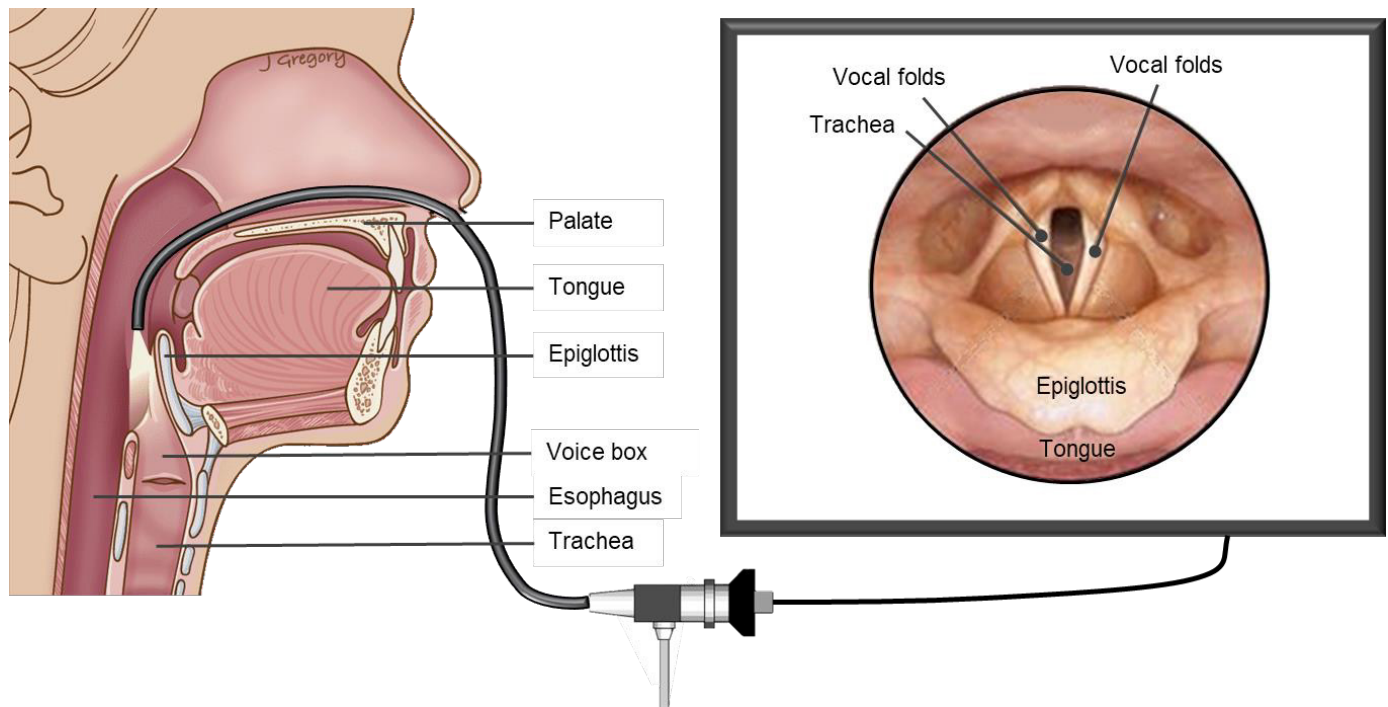


Figure: FEES scope position and view

This image is adapted with permission from: ent4kids available at: <https://www.ent4kids.co.uk/endoscopy-of-the-airway-in-children> and Copyright © Jill Gregory • Thyroid, Head & Neck Cancer Guide, THANC Foundation. All rights reserved. Available at: <https://thancguide.org>

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at **811**.

This material is for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction, or treatment. If you have questions, talk with your doctor or appropriate healthcare provider.