

Following your gastroscopy and injection of varices with sedation

Gemini Endoscopy Suite
Tel: 01271 349180

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

After your gastroscopy a responsible adult must collect you and stay with you for at least 12 hours, because you will be drowsy from the medication you have been given. Small amounts of sedation will remain in your body for up to 24 hours. During this period, although you may feel wide-awake you will still be under the influence of the sedation. Your concentration and co-ordination may be impaired and you may feel light-headed or faint.

Sedation can impair your reflexes and judgement

It is for these reasons that for **24 hours after your procedure** you:

- Go home and take complete rest for the remainder of the day and have a quiet day tomorrow
- Must not drive a car (your car insurance is invalid for the 24 hour period)
- Must not ride a motorbike or bicycle
- Must not operate any machinery or electrical items, e.g. kitchen appliances
- Must not drink alcohol
- Must not take any sleeping tablets
- Must not sign any legally binding documents
- Do not bath or shower
- Must not work

How does injecting work?

During your gastroscopy procedure today you have had some injections applied to the veins in your oesophagus (gullet). Sometimes with liver disease, blood flow through the liver is restricted causing an increase in the blood pressure in and around the liver. This is called portal hypertension. This back pressure of blood can cause a network of enlarged weak varicose veins to develop in the gullet or stomach. These are called varices. If one of these veins ruptures, severe bleeding can occur resulting in vomiting of blood or passing blood in the form of black stools. During your endoscopy, a special injecting device was used to inject the varices with a sclerosing agent. The sclerosant restricts the blood supply in these veins and they eventually disappear. This does not affect the normal blood supply in the gullet, because the varices are extra veins that have formed as a consequence of there being portal hypertension.

When can I eat and drink again?

Usually the nurse in recovery will check your swallowing with sips of cold water. This is to check and to make sure the normal sensation has returned.

- For the rest of the day take cool liquids only
- For the first 24 hours following your procedure take a soft diet
- After 24 hours if you are tolerating a soft diet, proceed to a normal diet

When I am at home, what if I feel unwell after the procedure?

Injecting is a safe procedure with a very low frequency of complication, but occasionally the following can occur:

Difficulty swallowing – The injected areas can become scarred, causing a narrowing in your gullet and discomfort when you swallow. At worst, this sensation can remain for several weeks, but will resolve.

Ulceration – Occasionally small ulcers can form in the gullet where the injections have been applied. These can be treated with some medication. If you feel that you are getting reflux pain that is getting worse, then consult your family doctor or Gastroenterologist. This is temporary and should settle down in a couple of weeks.

Sore throat / hoarse voice – You may experience a sore throat or hoarse voice. This is not unusual, and this should ease within a day or so.

Bleeding – It is normal to cough up small amounts of blood in your sputum, particularly because you have had injections applied to some veins in your gullet. This is fairly rare and should settle within a day. If however you vomit blood, or the bleeding is severe, you must consult your doctor for immediate medical advice.

Fever – This is extremely rare after a gastroscopy. A high temperature above 38 degrees may indicate that you may have developed an infection after your procedure. Should this happen, please consult your doctor for immediate medical advice.

Abdominal pain and bloating – Abdominal discomfort is fairly common after a gastroscopy. Some patients have discomfort due to air that is put into the stomach during the test, but this will subside rapidly.

Localised infection – For your procedure you will have had your medications administered through a special intravenous cannula. Sometimes the area can get sore and infected after the procedure. This may need a treatment with topical cream or some antibiotics. If this happens, please visit your GP for advice and treatment.

Medications

You may resume normal medications after your gastroscopy, unless advised otherwise.

If you take blood thinning medications please restart them on.....

When will I get the results?

A nurse will speak to you before you leave the Gemini Endoscopy Suite and explain:

- what was seen and done during your procedure
- whether you will need any further follow up
- that a copy of your report will be sent to your GP today and any results should be with your GP within 2 weeks

Follow up appointments

To completely eradicate the varices, you may require several treatments, usually between 3-4, which will require frequent visits to the Endoscopy unit. You will usually be allowed to go home the same day, although occasionally you may need to stay in hospital overnight.

Once the varices have been successfully treated, you will have an endoscopy every 6 months to a year. This is to check that the varices have not returned. If varices have returned they will be injected again. It is important that you attend the appointments because if varices are left un-treated, they may burst and bleed.

What if I need further advice and assistance?

If you ever have any signs of bleeding such as vomiting blood and/or dark stools, you must inform your GP immediately.

If any of the above symptoms persist or worsen after your test – such as bleeding, pain, temperature and shortness of breath, please follow the instructions below:

- In normal working hours Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm, telephone the Gemini Endoscopy Suite on **01271 349180**
- Outside these hours contact your GP surgery or if in an emergency come to the North Devon District Hospital A&E
- Alternatively telephone NHS Direct on **111**

Further information

Please telephone the Gemini Endoscopy Suite on **01271 349180**

www.bsg.org.uk – British Society of Gastroenterology

www.modern.nhs.uk – NHS Modernisation Agency National Endoscopy Programme

www.grs.nhs.uk – Endoscopy Global Rating Scale

References

Endoscopy Unit – Gateshead Health NHS Trust

Endoscopy Unit – St George’s Healthcare NHS Trust

Endoscopy Department – North West London Hospitals NHS Trust

Endoscopy Suite – Good Hope Hospital NHS Trust

Hypnovel (Midazolam) information literature

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

‘Care Opinion’ comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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