

Advice following your Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio-Pancreatography (ERCP)

With sedation, sphincterotomy and/or placement of biliary stent

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Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

Following your Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio-Pancreatography (ERCP)

This leaflet is for patients who have had ERCP with sedation. You may also have had a sphincterotomy and/or a biliary stent placed at the same time. After your ERCP, a responsible adult must collect you, 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.

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

- must 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 sign any legally binding documents
- must not take any sleeping tablets
- do not bath or shower
- must not work

Sedation can impair your reflexes and judgement

What will happen after my test?

Part of having an ERCP involves having a procedure called a sphincterotomy. This is a small incision or cut along a valve called the ampulla, in the duodenum. It is necessary to enable either stones to be removed, or to enable a stent to be placed, to allow the bile ducts to drain. If you have had a stent because you are jaundiced, it will take a few days for the bile to drain away, but you should feel an improvement with less itching and your faeces should have returned to a normal colour as well. If there is no improvement after a week, please see your GP who should re-refer you for further consultation.

Sometimes it is necessary to take biopsies. Biopsies are not always necessary if all appeared normal. Some biopsies are sent to the laboratory to be analysed by a pathologist. These results will either be sent to your GP, or you will have an appointment in the Outpatients Department to discuss the results with your hospital doctor.

When can I eat and drink again?

The local anaesthetic wears off after 30 minutes. 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. Fluids are advised for the first four hours, unless the endoscopist has advised you to remain nil-by-mouth. Afterwards, you can eat and drink as normal, unless advised otherwise. You may prefer to start with light foods before returning to your normal eating habits.

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

You may or may not experience any of the following conditions:

Abdominal pain and bloating: Abdominal discomfort is fairly common after an endoscopy. Some patients have discomfort due to air that is put into the stomach during the test, but this will subside rapidly. Very rarely a severe abdominal pain with sickness and a temperature can occur due to inflammation of the pancreas. This is called pancreatitis and will require hospital admission. If you notice that you have severe, worsening abdominal pain, please contact your GP immediately. Pancreatitis can be life-threatening, requiring intravenous fluids and antibiotics to treat.

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. Cough sweets can help to relieve this.

Bleeding: If you vomit blood you must return to the hospital straight away. You may cough up small amounts of blood in your sputum particularly if you had lots of biopsies and after a sphincterotomy. This is fairly rare and should settle within a day. If the bleeding persists for more than 24 hours, and is getting heavier, please consult your GP for immediate medical advice.

Fever: This is rare after an ERCP, but sometimes it is possible to get an infection around the bile ducts called cholangitis. A high temperature above 38 degrees or shivering may indicate that you have developed an infection after your procedure. Should this happen, please consult your GP for immediate medical advice.

Medications

You may resume normal medications after your ERCP, unless advised otherwise. If you are taking any blood thinning medications, such as aspirin, warfarin or clopidogrel, your consultant should advise you what to do after your procedure. They may advise you to not take your medications for a couple of days afterwards – but please check this before you leave the Radiology Department or ward when you are discharged.

When will I get the results?

The endoscopist will speak to you before you leave the Radiology Department and explain:

- What was seen and done during your procedure
- Whether you will need any further follow up

A copy of your results will be sent to your GP within the next week.

What if I need further advice and assistance?

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 5pm), telephone the Radiology Department on **01271 311869**
- Outside these hours, contact your GP surgery
- Alternatively, telephone Accident & Emergency on **01271 322480**

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns, please telephone the Radiology Department on **01271 311869**.

Useful websites

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 email 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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