Title of leaflet: Having an ERCP – Information for Patients
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Legal Notice
Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note it is always subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

Useful Links:
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust Website
www.buckinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk

British Society of Gastroenterology Website
http://www.bsg.org.uk/

Core Digestive Disorders Information Website
http://www.corecharity.org.uk/

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Stoke Mandeville Hospital
Mandeville Road
AYLESBURY
Bucks HP21 8AL
Tel: 01296 315220 (Nursing)
Tel: 01296 315175 (Admin)
Fax: 01296 315202

Wycombe Hospital
Queen Alexandra Road
HIGH WYCOMBE
Bucks HP11 2TT
Tel: 01494 425073
Tel: 01494 425710
Fax: 01494 425876

Having an Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio Pancreatogram (ERCP)

Pre-procedure information for patients and appointment details

www.buckinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk
**Introduction**

You have been advised by your GP or hospital doctor to have an investigation known as an ERCP.

Please read all the information in this booklet carefully as failure to follow instructions may result in your test being cancelled.

**Appointment**

Venue:  
- ☐ Stoke Mandeville Hospital
- ☐ Wycombe Hospital

Please phone the Endoscopy department on 01296 315175 if the date or time is not convenient to you at the earliest opportunity so that we can reschedule your appointment.

**Notes**

You may want to use this space to help you remember any questions you want to ask when you come in for your appointment.
Once home, if you experience problems that you feel may be related to the test, please inform hospital staff at once. You may need to return to hospital for treatment.

Information and instructions will be given after your procedure to cover such an event.

“How can I help to reduce healthcare associated infections?”

Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand rub (special gel) available at the entrance of the hospital and at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward or hospital. You should also clean your hands before eating using the wipes provided. In some situations hands may need to be washed at a sink using soap and water rather than using the hand rub. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

If you would like the use of our translation service, please contact the unit to organise on 01296 315175.

Consent

All procedures undertaken in hospital, require your consent, this is a legal requirement.

Please read this booklet carefully as it provides all the information you need to make an informed choice paying particular reference to the risks associated with your procedure.

During the admission procedure shortly after arriving, one of the Endoscopy specialist nurses will explain your procedure and go through the risks associated, giving you the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. Once you are completely happy with the information given, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Please note you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

Not all procedures but some require tissue samples to be taken for microscopic examination. Rather than destroying the samples after the examination, we ask your permission to use these tissue samples for teaching and research purposes. All specimens are treated anonymously.

Your consent once signed is held in our hospital notes, however should you like a copy we can organise a photocopy for your personal records.

What is an ERCP?

An ERCP (Endoscopic retrograde Cholangio-Pancreatogram) is a procedure which combines the use of an endoscope (a flexible telescope to look inside your gut) and x-rays. It is used mainly to diagnose conditions that affect the bile ducts and pancreas. It is often possible to treat the condition at the same time.
The endoscope is passed easily down through the stomach to find the exit of the bile duct and pancreas. A small tube is then passed through the endoscope into this opening, and dye which shows up under x-ray is injected. This enables the doctor to decide whether any disease is present and, if so, treatment can take place through the endoscope at the same time.

If the x-rays show a gallstone, the doctor may enlarge the opening of the bile duct by making a very small incision with an electrically heated wire (diathermy), which you will not feel. The gallstones will be collected in a tiny basket or left to pass into the intestine.

If a narrowing is found preventing the passage of bile a short tube (stent) can be placed in the bile duct. You will not be explain your test results before you go home and if you wish, with your family member. You will also be given an aftercare leaflet. Occasionally, it may be necessary for you to stay overnight for observation.

After sedation, your mental ability to think clearly and make decisions may be affected for up to 24 hours after the procedure even though you feel wide awake. For this reason, you must have someone who can collect you from the Unit, take you home and look after you for the rest of the day. However, you may resume eating as normal.

For 24 hours after your procedure, you must not:

- Drive
- Operate potentially dangerous machinery
- Sign any legal documents
- Drink any alcohol

For 8 hours after sedation, you should also not:

- Use potentially dangerous appliances such as a cooker or kettle
- Have a bath unsupervised
- Look after dependants on your own
- Go to work
- Take sleeping tablets or recreational drugs
Family friends and relatives
Following the pre-assessment, persons accompanying you will be asked to return back to the reception area until after your procedure. There is a selection of refreshment areas which relatives and friends can use whilst waiting for you. Please ask a member of staff to direct them.

Prior to your procedure
You will be asked to undress and get into a gown and your dressing gown. A nurse will record your blood pressure, pulse and oxygen saturations. You will also be given an antibiotic tablet with a small sip of water and have an intravenous cannula (small plastic tube) put into your vein for the sedation.

The examination
You will be asked to remove your spectacles and dentures. Jewellery or metallic objects should also be removed because they interfere with x-rays and diathermy. For your comfort, the doctor or nurse will spray your throat with local anaesthetic and give you an injection to make you sleepy and relaxed. A small mouth guard will be gently placed between the teeth or gums to keep your mouth open; oxygen is attached to give you a little extra oxygen to breathe during the test. A nurse will stay with you throughout the procedure.

After the examination
Your throat may feel slightly sore. After resting, you will be given a drink and some biscuits. You may feel a little bloated due to air blown in through the tube. This will quickly pass. Because the risk of complications is small, it is likely that you will be allowed home after your ERCP, even if you have received treatment on your bile ducts. A healthcare professional will be aware of the presence of the tube, which can remain in place permanently. Occasionally, it may be necessary to replace the tube.

What are the risks?
An ERCP is a skilled procedure and is performed by a highly trained doctor who takes every care to reduce any risks. The main risk is of inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis). The risk of this occurring is about 2-3%.

If special treatment is required during the procedure, to help remove a gallstone for example, an incision will be made in the lower end of the bile duct. There is a slight chance of bleeding or perforation from this incision (also in about 2% of patients). These problems usually settle down on their own, though they may delay your return home by a few days. Very rarely, an operation is necessary to treat a complication.

An ERCP usually requires the use of a sedative drug, which can, in a very small number of patients, cause the breathing or heart rate to slow down. For this reason, the nurse will put a probe on your finger to monitor your pulse and oxygen levels. You might also have your blood pressure and respiratory rate monitored. The effects of the sedative are easy to reverse if necessary. If you are asthmatic, or have any breathing difficulties, please inform the nurse on your arrival and bring your inhaler with you if you use one.

General information
- You will need to take some time off work and you can expect to be in hospital for most of the day. The results
will usually be discussed with you before you leave.

☐ Please bring with you a dressing gown, slippers, a toothbrush, toiletries and nightclothes for use in the unlikely event of your having to stay in hospital overnight. You may also bring something to read.

☐ Please do not bring any items of value such as jewellery or credit cards. We cannot accept any responsibility for their loss.

☐ If you are asthmatic, please bring your inhalers with you and let the nurse know.

☐ If you have diabetes, please inform the clerk when booking your appointment and bring your diabetes tablets or insulin with you on the day. If you need advice about diabetes control before and after your procedure, please contact your Diabetes Nurse Specialist or GP.

☐ If you are taking Warfarin (or any other blood thinning tablets e.g. Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Apixaban) or Clopidogrel (or other “antiplatelet” drugs), please inform the Endoscopy booking clerk when making your appointment and speak to a nurse.

☐ Aspirin can be continued.

☐ If you are taking any other regular medications, please continue these as normal and bring your list of medications with you.

☐ If you have a heart valve replacement, please contact the unit and speak to a nurse.

☐ Do let us know if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or trying to conceive since this examination involves the use of x-rays.

Preparing for your ERCP

Morning Appointment
Please do not eat after midnight prior to your morning appointment. You may drink water up to 2 hours before your appointment.

Afternoon Appointment
On the day of your appointment, eat a light breakfast at 07.30am have no more to eat; you may drink water up to two hours before your appointment. This is to prevent food or liquids obscuring the views of the endoscope and preventing the examination from continuing with the need to rebook.

On arrival at the unit
The receptionist will book you in and then a member of the Endoscopy nursing team will collect you from the reception area and take you to a private room for pre-assessment. Here a brief medical history will be taken and your current medications will be documented (please bring your prescription list with you). The nurse will also explain the risks involved in the procedure and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.