



Having an Oesophageal Dilatation (gullet stretch)

You have been advised to have this procedure because of your problems with swallowing. To do this, we will perform a gastroscopy followed by a dilatation of the gullet.

What is a Gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy is a technique to look directly into your gullet (oesophagus), stomach and first part of the small bowel (duodenum) to help find out what is causing your problems.

It also allows samples of tissue (biopsy) to be taken painlessly for testing later and for the gullet to be stretched.

The endoscope is a thin, flexible tube with a bright light on the end that is passed through the mouth and down into the stomach. If a narrowing is found, it can be stretched using one of two methods. The method used for you will be chosen during the procedure. Either method will take between 5 to 15 minutes.

Method 1: A balloon is passed through the endoscope and into the narrowed area. The balloon is inflated to stretch the narrowing.

Method 2: A thin wire is passed through the endoscope, through the narrowed area and into the stomach. If the narrowing is particularly severe, it may be necessary for this to be done using X-ray guidance.

The endoscope is removed leaving the wire as a guide for a balloon, which is put into the narrowed area. The balloon is inflated to stretch the narrowing.

Small plastic tubes will then be threaded over this wire to stretch the gullet narrowing. Up to six of these plastic tubes may be inserted and removed, one after the other.

A video recording and /or photographs may be taken for your records.

What are the risks associated with this procedure?

- Bloating and abdominal discomfort is not unusual for a few hours
- You may have a sore throat for 24 hours
- Mild pain behind the breast bone is quite common
- Occasionally, bleeding may occur from abnormal tissue such as a cancerous narrowing of the oesophagus
- Perforation of the oesophagus (making a hole) is a recognised complication of less than 4 in 100 cases and would mean a stay in hospital and you may require an operation to repair it
- Upper gastro intestinal endoscopies may involve a slight risk to crowned teeth or dental bridgework
- Using sedation can cause breathing complications in up to 1 in 200 procedures, which usually are not serious

Information for Patients

The person doing the test will discuss any questions you have about the risks associated with this procedure.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

The procedure is to help diagnose and possibly treat your swallowing problem. Like all tests, this is not guaranteed to demonstrate all abnormalities and on rare occasions conditions are not identified.

What are the alternatives?

The same procedure can be done using X-rays and balloons which are passed into the gullet.

Preparing for a Gastroscopy and oesophageal dilatation

Please read the information enclosed carefully. If you have any queries or worries, contact the unit where you will be having your procedure.

If you are diabetic, on warfarin, clopidogrel, rivaroxaban, apixaban, or dabigatran, please contact the unit for further information. Please bring any medication you are currently taking, e.g. inhalers or, insulin, to your appointment.

If you are taking a number of tablets, please bring in your repeat prescription sheet.

To allow a clear view, the stomach must be empty, so please follow these instructions:

- Do not have anything to eat for at least **six hours** before the test
- Do not drink milk for **four hours** before your test. Milk will line the stomach and not allow a clear view of the lining
- You may drink clear fluids (water, black tea or black coffee) up to **two hours** before the time of the appointment

When you arrive at the hospital

Please report to the reception desk where a receptionist will check your details and direct you to the waiting area. Please be aware that the appointment time you have been given, will be your admission time.

Your procedure will be carried out as near to this time as possible, however, on occasions due to emergency patients being seen, this may be delayed.

- Please do not bring any valuables to the hospital with you
- Please do not wear any nail varnish, lipstick or jewellery (tongue studs must be removed)
- Please bring a contact number of a relative or friend

A nurse will then explain the procedure to you, to make sure you understand the benefits, and possible risks as detailed in this leaflet. The staff will want you to be as relaxed as possible for the test, and will not mind answering your questions. Provided you are happy for the procedure to be performed, you will be asked to sign the consent form to confirm your understanding of the procedure. You will be offered a copy of this.

This form also asks for your consent to further procedures that may be necessary during the procedure, including taking tissue samples (biopsies) that may be helpful in diagnosing your problem. Tissue may be used for research, but you can request that no removed samples be used for this purpose on your consent form.

Information for Patients

Just before the procedure, you will also see the person who will be performing the test and they will ask you to confirm your agreement and they will also sign your consent form. If you need the help of an interpreter to understand any of this information, or on the day of the procedure, please contact the unit where you will be having the test as soon as possible.

Important information for patients arriving by ambulance:

To ensure you do not miss your appointment and arrive home in a timely fashion, please when booking your transport, give the following instructions:

For morning appointments: please arrange for the ambulance to collect you at 8 am

For afternoon appointments: please arrange for the ambulance to collect you at 12 noon

Privacy & dignity

Delivering same-sex accommodation is a long standing commitment in the NHS as part of the drive to deliver the best possible experience for all patients (DOH 2007). Endoscopy Units within University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, maintain these standards either by operating single sex areas or single sex days.

Please note that relatives are NOT allowed to accompany you past the admission area due to privacy and dignity reasons.

Eliminating mixed sex accommodation is our priority, except where it is in the overall best interests of the patient, such as . in an emergency (they have a life threatening condition) or where delays to that patients treatment would mean deterioration in their condition. Should a patient of the opposite sex require such urgent care during your visit, we will ensure your privacy and dignity is maintained by screening off the patient of the opposite sex.

On occasions, medications are used during this procedure, which are known as 'off shelf'. This refers to medicines that are used for clinical situations which fall outside of the terms of their Summary of Products Characteristics.

The use of medicines in this way is seen as a legitimate aspect of clinical practice and is often necessary in many areas of medicine. For further information concerning the use of 'off shelf' drugs, please log onto the Medicines and Healthcare product Regulatory Agency (MHRA) website.

If you need the help of an interpreter to understand any of this information, or on the day of the procedure, please contact the unit where you will be having the test, as soon as possible.

Please note relatives/friends or children should not be used as interpreters when you are required to sign your consent form. You should contact the Endoscopy Unit which will arrange for an interpreter to be present.

During the test

You will not have to undress, but we may give you a gown to wear. You must remove dentures, glasses and contact lenses and loosen tight clothing around the neck.

In the examination room you will be made comfortable on the couch, resting on your left side. A nurse will stay with you throughout the procedure. To keep your mouth slightly apart, a plastic mouthpiece will be put gently between your teeth or gums. When the person doing the test passes the endoscope into your stomach it will not cause pain, nor will it interfere with your breathing. The whole examination usually takes 10–20 minutes.

Sedation

The procedure is normally done with sedation. Occasionally, sedation may not be required. If this is the case it will be discussed with you. If you do not want to have sedation, discuss this with your nurse and the person doing the test.

Sedation will make you slightly drowsy and relaxed but not unconscious. You will be in a state called co-operative sedation. This means that although drowsy you will still hear what is said to you and therefore able to follow simple instructions during the procedure.

Please note that we will not be able to give you sedation if you do not have a responsible adult to collect you and stay with you for 24 hours following your procedure.

You will be given oxygen through small tubes placed gently in your nostrils or through the plastic guard in your mouth.

A clip will be attached to a finger or ear-lobe so that the levels of oxygen in the blood can be monitored. Your blood pressure may also be measured automatically during the procedure using a cuff around your arm.

After the test, you will remain in the unit to rest for two hours. Following this, you will be asked to have a drink of water before going home. Occasionally an X-ray of the chest will be taken before you are allowed to drink.

Going home

It is essential that a responsible adult comes to pick you up from the unit and accompanies you home by car or taxi – public transport is not suitable. Please note the unit closes at 6pm. Your relative/friend should arrive no later than 5.30pm to collect you.

When you arrive home, it is important to rest quietly for the remainder of the day, with someone to look after you for 24 hours. It is advisable to have the following day off work.

For the first 24 hours following sedation **do not**:

- Drive a car
- Drink alcohol
- Take sleeping tablets
- Operate any machinery or electrical items – even a kettle
- Sign any legally binding documents
- Work at heights (including climbing ladders or onto chairs)

Sedation can impair your reflexes and judgement. The effect of the sedation will have worn off by the next day and most patients will be able to resume normal activities.

You will only be able to drink fluids for the first 24 hours following your procedure. After this you will need to gradually increase the thickness of your food over the next few days.

When will I know the results?

Before discharge from the unit, the nurse who has been looking after you will be able to give you a brief outline of the test results. A copy of the report will be sent to your GP or the doctor who referred you for the procedure. If a biopsy has been taken, the laboratory results will take longer, about 4–6 weeks. You will be given a copy of the report to take home with you.

Information for Patients

We would advise against travelling abroad in the first three days following your procedure. If you have any travel plans please discuss these with us.

If you have any questions about the test, please contact the unit where you will be having your procedure.

To contact us by telephone before your appointment: (note this number should not be used for booking enquires):

If you need the help of an interpreter to understand any of this information, or on the day of the procedure, please contact the unit where you will be having the test on receipt of this letter.

Solihull Endoscopy Unit: Monday to Friday, 08:30 to 17:30 (excluding bank holidays), **0121 424 5394**. An answer phone is available for you to leave your name, telephone number and message. We will return your call.

Good Hope Hospital – Scoping Suite Treatment Centre: Monday to Friday, 08:30 to 17:30 (excluding bank holidays), **0121 424 9506**. An answer phone is available for you to leave your name, telephone number and message. We will return your call.

Heartlands Endoscopy Unit: Monday to Friday, 08:30 to 17:30 (excluding bank holidays), **0121 424 0438**.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Endoscopy Unit: Monday to Friday, 08:30 to 17:30 (excluding bank holidays), **0121 371 3833**.

Bowel Cancer Screening Patients: Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 17:30, **0121 424 9174** or contact your screening nurse directly.

If your call is out of these hours and you require urgent medical advice, you can contact one of the following:

- Speak to an Endoscopy Nurse directly – phone **0121 424 2000** for Good Hope, Solihull and Heartlands Hospital or **0121 371 2000** for QEHB and ask to be put through to the Endoscopy Nurse on call
- Your own GP
- NHS Direct – Telephone **0845 4647**

Please keep this information safe in case you wish to refer to it in the future.

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.

Information for Patients

Endoscopy

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk