

Patient information

Gastroscopy with variceal banding

You have been referred by your doctor to have a gastroscopy, which may include variceal banding. This information booklet has been written to explain the procedure. This will help you to make an informed decision before consenting to the procedure. If you are unable to attend your appointment, please inform us as soon as possible.

Please ensure you read this booklet and the enclosed consent form thoroughly. Please also complete the enclosed Health Questionnaire.

You may be contacted by an endoscopy trained nurse before your procedure to go through the admission process and answer any queries you may have. If you are not contacted please come to your appointment at the time stated in your letter.

Please note your appointment time is your arrival time on the unit and not the time of your procedure.

If you have any mobility issues or if there is a possibility you could be pregnant, please contact the appointment staff on 01284 713551

Please remember there will be other patients in the unit who may arrive after you but are taken in for their procedure before you, this is for medical reasons or they are seeing a different doctor.

Due to limited space available and to maintain other patients' privacy and dignity, we only allow patients (and carers) through to the ward area. Relatives/ escorts will be contacted once you are ready for collection.

The Endoscopy Unit endeavours to offer single sex facilities, and we aim to make you stay as comfortable and stress free as possible.

Medication

If you are taking **WARFARIN, CLOPIDOGREL, RIVAROXABAN or any other anticoagulant (Blood thinning medication)** please contact the appointment staff on 01284 713551, your GP or anticoagulation nurses, as special arrangements may be necessary.

Diabetic Patients should contact their diabetic nurse or GP, please inform them that you are required to be nil by mouth for **6 hours** prior to your procedure (see section – How do I prepare for my Gastrosocopy).

Please ensure you bring your current medications with you when you attend for your procedure.

If you are in any doubt whether you should stop or continue your medication, please ring 01284 712653.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

It is necessary to have clear views and for this the stomach must be completely empty. It is very important that you **do not** eat or drink for at least **6 hours** before your appointment or this could lead to the cancellation of your procedure. If your appointment is in the afternoon, please only eat light meals prior to your **6 hours** of being nil by mouth.

What happens when I arrive?

On arrival to the Endoscopy Unit please report to reception where the receptionist will check your personal details. You will be asked to take a seat in the waiting area until you are collected by a nurse, and taken through to one of our admission rooms. Due to limited space we are unable to allow anyone to accompany you unless they are a carer. We will contact your relative/escort once you are ready to be collected.

You will be taken into the admission room where a nurse will explain the procedure and they will ask you about your health, medications and allergies. They will take your pulse and blood pressure. If you are a diabetic your blood glucose level will be checked.

The nurse will discuss the consent form with you and answer any questions that you may have. We want to make sure you understand the procedure and its implications.

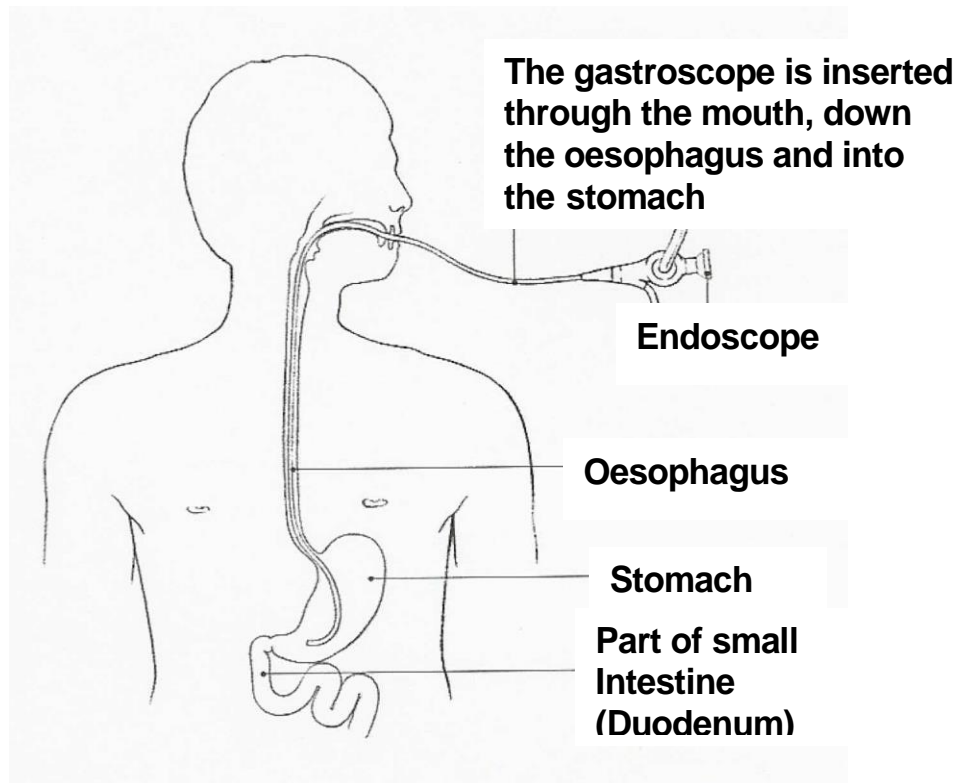
You can expect to be on the unit **2-4 hours**.

What are varices?

Varices occur when the normal blood flow through the liver becomes impaired due to scarring on the liver (cirrhosis). Blood is re-routed around the liver through small vessels, usually in the oesophagus and stomach. Some of these blood vessels can become enlarged and swollen, these are known as varices. Due to high pressure, known as portal hypertension, varices may rupture and cause bleeding.

What is a gastroscopy with variceal banding?

A Gastroscopy is a procedure which allows an endoscopist to look directly at your oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. A flexible tube (gastroscope) with a bright light on the end is gently passed through your mouth and down into the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. During the procedure the endoscopist can apply medical rubber bands to the base of the varices; this is done to prevent varices from rupturing in the future.



Are there alternatives to gastroscopy with variceal banding?

A Gastroscopy is the best way of looking into your oesophagus and stomach and diagnosis of gastro-oesophageal varices. Variceal banding is one of the best methods of treatment to prevent varices rupturing.

Sedation

It is recommended that patients undergoing gastroscopy with possible variceal banding have sedation for the procedure. Sedation is given through an injection into a vein. Sedation will help relax and take away some of the awareness of the procedure.

Please note that this is not a general anaesthetic.

What does a gastroscopy with variceal banding involve?

- You will be introduced to the nurses and endoscopist who will be with you throughout your gastroscopy.
- The endoscopist will check that you have full understanding of your procedure and that you are willing to go ahead with the procedure.
- In order to monitor your breathing, pulse and blood pressure, the nurse will place a probe on your finger and a cuff on your arm.
- A nurse will be with you at all times, giving advice and support. You will be asked to remove any dentures and glasses and lay on your left side. A mouth guard will be placed in your mouth to protect your teeth and gums.
- The flexible tube (gastroscope) will then be passed into your mouth and passed over your tongue to the back of the throat and then down into your oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. We would like to reassure you that although the procedure can sometimes be uncomfortable, it is not painful and you can breathe normally.
- If variceal banding is undertaken the gastroscope will be removed from the mouth and then the procedure is repeated with a small plastic fitting attached to the gastroscope, which allows the rubber bands to be applied to the base of the varices. This procedure usually takes between 5 - 15 minutes.

Are there any complications?

As with any medical procedure, the risks must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure. The doctor who has requested the procedure will have considered this very carefully.

Gastroscopy with variceal banding is known as an invasive procedure and therefore carries risks and complications.

Major risks / complications include:

- Perforation of the gullet, stomach or duodenum is a very rare complication (less than 1 in 10,000). This may require an operation to repair the damage.
- Aspiration of fluid into the chest.
- Bleeding is rare, but can be serious enough for you to be admitted to hospital and treated with blood transfusions or further endoscopic procedures. Rarely the varices bleed so profusely that a balloon on a tube is passed to prevent the varices filling with blood (Sengstaken Blakemore tube). This may require a period of intensive care.
- Mechanical damage to teeth or bridgework.
- Reaction to medications.
- Disturbance of your pulse, breathing and blood pressure.
- Very rarely, a narrowing of the gullet may follow treatment by banding, due to scarring. This can occur after many months and may require gastroscopy and stretching of the oesophagus.
- A sore throat or abdominal tenderness. As the gastroscope is passed down and around, it brushes against the lining and may cause a small amount of bruising.
- In-complete gastroscopy occurs if the procedure is abandoned due to technical difficulties or the procedure is causing patient distress.

After the procedure

You will recover in the ward of the Endoscopy Unit; you should expect to be in the department between 1 - 4 hours. If you have had variceal banding the doctor will decide how long you will need to remain nil by mouth for post procedure. It is standard practice to have a fluid only diet for 24 hours post variceal banding and then commence to a soft diet the next day. The nursing staff will inform you of this prior to your discharge.

Due to the effects of the sedation you will need to wait in the department for your escort to collect you from the unit. You must have supervision at home for at least 24 hours following sedation. The sedation lasts longer than you might imagine, so it is very important that after your procedure you do not do any of the following for at least 24 hours:

- Drive any vehicles
- Operate machinery or electrical items (including a cooker or kettle)
- Take sleeping tablets

- Drink alcohol or smoke
- Sign any legal documents
- Work at heights (including climbing ladders or onto chairs)

Before you are discharged, the nurse will tell you what was seen during your procedure and what to do next. You will be given a printed information sheet to take home.

Side effects

Serious side effects from this procedure are rare but for the rest of the day you may have a sore throat. You may also feel a little bloated if some of the air we use for the test is left behind. Both these things will pass and no need for medication.

If you experience any of the following problems please contact your GP or Emergency Department immediately informing them you have had a gastroscopy with variceal banding:

- Severe abdominal / chest pain
- A firm and swollen abdomen
- High temperature or feeling feverish
- Vomiting
- Bleeding

If you are unable to contact or speak to a GP and you are experiencing any of these symptoms we would advise you to attend your nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

If you have any concerns prior or post procedure please contact the Endoscopy Unit during office hours: 8.00am to 9.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.00am to 6.00pm on Friday. Telephone number: 01284 713952.

Out of hours, you can contact West Suffolk Hospital 01284 713000 and ask to be put through to the on-call endoscopy nurse for advice.

Summary of important information

A gastroscopy with variceal banding is a safe procedure and a good way to investigate and treat your symptoms. Risks and complications are rare and the benefits outweigh the risks. However it is your decision whether you wish to go ahead with the procedure or not and you are free to change your mind at any time.

It is everyone's aim for you to be seen as soon as possible. However, the unit can be busy and your investigation may be delayed. If emergencies occur, these patients will obviously be given priority over less urgent cases.

Due to limited space available and to maintain other patient's privacy and dignity, we only allow patients (and carers) through to the ward area. Relatives /escorts will be contacted once the patient is ready for collection.

Please do not bring valuables to the hospital. The hospital cannot accept any responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property during your time spent on the premises.

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please notify 01284 713551 as soon as possible.

Training doctors and other health professionals is essential to the continuation of the National Health Service, and improving the quality of care. Your treatment may provide an important opportunity for such training under the careful supervision of a senior doctor. You can however, decline to be involved in the formal training of medical or other students: this will not affect your care and treatment.

Checklist

Things to remember before your procedure:

- Read the booklets carefully
- Fill in questionnaire
- Do not eat or drink anything for at least 6 hours prior to your procedure
- Check specific medication instructions
- Transport arrangements made if you are having sedation
- Bring this booklet and questionnaire with you to the appointment
- Do not sign the consent form, but bring it with you to the appointment

If you wish discuss any areas of concern, or need more information, please contact the Endoscopy Unit on the following telephone number: 01284 713952.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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