Patient Information Sheet

Oesophageal manometry and 24 hour pH measurement

This information explains how to prepare for your forthcoming oesophageal (gullet) tests and gives you information about what is involved. Please read the instructions carefully.

You may be having one or both tests. Your appointment letter will explain this.

What is oesophageal manometry?
This is a test that measures the pressure activity within the oesophagus. An assessment can then be made of how well the oesophagus is working and whether contractions are co-ordinated.

What is 24-hour pH monitoring?
This is a test that measures the amount of acid coming up (reflux) into the oesophagus from the stomach over a 24-hour period. This allows us to establish whether your symptoms are due to acid reflux.

Why are these tests necessary?
The tests provide valuable information regarding your condition and help work out what is the best treatment for you. Unfortunately, there are no other less invasive tests available that will give us this information at the present time.

What are the risks from having the test?
The risk of causing serious harm to you with these tests is very small but includes bleeding or damage to your nose, throat, larynx (voice-box) or oesophagus. There is no published information on how often these problems occur however they are uncommon. Occasionally people may feel faint whilst putting the tube into the oesophagus but this is not dangerous and you will be cared for by a senior doctor and specialist nurse during the tests. You may commonly experience a runny nose, sore throat or slight discomfort on swallowing which will go away when the tube is removed.

**What should I expect?**

**Before the test**

You should stop taking indigestion medication up to two weeks before the test so that we can obtain an accurate assessment of the amount of acid that is refluxing. Full instructions will be sent in your appointment letter as this can vary according to which medicines you are taking. You should continue taking other medication for other medical conditions such as epilepsy, asthma etc as normal. You should not eat or drink anything in the four hours prior to the test. Please do not wear make-up on the day of your examination: this will prevent the tape used to secure the tube from sticking. If you are allergic to any tape please inform the person performing the test. Wear loose comfortable clothes.

**On arrival**

A doctor or nurse will explain the procedure to you. This is to ensure you understand the test and all its implications. You will be asked to sign a consent form if you agree to have the procedures carried out.
During the test

Unfortunately you cannot be put to sleep or sedated during the procedure. You will be asked to sit upright on a couch. A catheter (tube) with pressure sensors will be passed via your nose into your oesophagus. This will involve drinking water to ease the passage of the tube. Once the tube is in place you will be asked to lie on your back on the couch.

The tube will then be slowly withdrawn and measurements of pressure will be recorded at 1cm intervals. During this you will be asked to take a sharp breath in and straight out. We will give you sips of water to swallow. The breaths and swallows will allow us to examine the length and activity of the oesophagus.

Once this is completed we shall know the level at which to place the 24-hour pH electrode (tube). It is a much thinner tube that tends to be less uncomfortable. It is positioned in the same way as the previous tube. The procedure will take approximately 60 minutes after which time you will be able to return home.

Will I be able to feel the tube?

During the test you will feel the tube in the back of the throat. If you are undergoing 24-hour pH monitoring you will be aware of the tube. You may find it uncomfortable but you should not feel any pain. Some people find bread and other dry food difficult to swallow. We recommend lots of drinks and sucking on sweets to ease this. You can eat and drink normally with the tube in place.

Can I carry out my normal activities during the recording period?

Yes. It is important that you carry out your normal activities as far as possible during the recording period to see if they might be related to your symptoms. There are no restrictions on eating, smoking, alcohol and activity therefore. You should not however undertake strenuous physical exercise such as jogging or bike riding that could result in
damaging the monitoring equipment. Showering or having a bath should be avoided for the same reasons.

**Who can I contact for help or advice during the 24 Hour pH test?**
Following insertion of the pH tube the doctor and nurse will explain how to use the monitoring equipment during the recording period and where to return the equipment the next day. If you have any further questions or feel unsure regarding the advice you have been given, please contact the nurse specialist who assisted the doctor in carrying out the test, during office hours (9am - 5pm) Monday – Friday on (0191) 445 6132. Outside these hours you should contact Ward 11 at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and ask to speak to one of the nurses. Their number is (0191) 445 2011. If you complain of severe reflux or indigestion during the test you can take your normal anti-reflux or indigestion medication but it should be stressed that this will prevent full interpretation of the study results and should only be done as a last resort. The time when medication was taken should be recorded.

**Risks**
There is a small risk that the tube could slide up or down in your gullet during the recording period causing increased discomfort and possibly vomiting. If either of these problems occur, you can, if necessary remove the tube yourself as described below or alternatively you can attend the A&E Department at the hospital where it can be removed for you.

**Instructions for removing the pH tube**
You should be sitting upright
The tape securing the tube to the nostril is loosened.
The tube is pulled smoothly out (about 30 to 40 cm in length).
If it cannot be easily removed you should attend the A&E department for assistance.
The tube should never be cut due to the risk of it being swallowed.
The removed tube should be returned to the endoscopy unit the following day for correct disposal in a plastic bag.
You must also return the monitoring equipment.

**Instructions for returning the equipment**
You should return to the endoscopy unit the next day 24 hours following insertion of the tube to have it removed and to return the monitoring equipment.
You should report to the reception desk where a nurse specialist or doctor will be available to take the tube out. This will only take a few minutes and should not be uncomfortable to do. After this you can go home.
Please re-start taking your usual indigestion medicine until you are seen at the hospital with results of the tests.

**When will I know the results?**
The results of the test will be analysed before a diagnosis can be made. Once this is done the consultant in charge of your care will be informed and decide the next course of action. It is reasonable to expect to hear from the hospital within 4 weeks of having the test. If you do not and wish to speak to someone regarding this, please contact your consultant’s secretary by ringing the Hospital on (0191) 4820000.

*Reference: Guidelines for oesophageal manometry and pH monitoring. BSG guidelines 2006*

**Data Protection**
Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us improve the services available your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.
This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request