

Useful information for patients due to have a consultation, treatment or surgery

Introduction

This factsheet has been written for patients who are due to have a hospital consultation, treatment or surgery at East Cheshire Hospital Trust. It has been developed by clinicians who are responsible for your care and aims to provide you with information and resources which you may find helpful while you are waiting.

If you are concerned that your condition is worsening

This information is intended to support your general health while you are waiting for your hospital treatment. If you are concerned that your condition is worsening or are worried about any aspect of your health, contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice. In an emergency contact 999.

Medication

If you have been prescribed medication, it is very important to take it exactly as directed.

Starting a new medication

Before using a new medication, carefully read all the directions on the label and the 'patient information leaflet' (PIL) that comes inside the packet or box (it is also a good idea to keep these leaflets in one place so that you know where to find them).

You can access NHS medicine guides online here: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>.

If you have any questions or concerns about your medication

If you have any questions or concerns about your medication or are confused or unsure about how to take it, it is important to talk to a healthcare professional such as your GP or pharmacist.

When taking your medication, you should:

- Take it at the right time of day, and at the prescribed dose.
- Check the instructions in the packet or box, to make sure you're taking it properly. Some medicines should only be taken before a meal on an empty stomach, but others need to be taken with or after food, for example.
- Use your own supply and never take medication prescribed for someone else.
- Let your doctor or pharmacist know if you experience any side effects as they may want to change the dose or try a different medicine for you.
- Don't stop using your medication unless directed to do so by your doctor, since abruptly stopping some medicines can lead to severe side effects.

Tips on remembering when to take your medicines

The following tips may help you remember to take your medicines regularly, as prescribed:

- Create a medication plan that lists all your medication and when you should take them, to help you develop a routine.
- Build medication into your daily routine so you never forget to take it, such as before brushing your teeth at night or before/after eating breakfast.
- Use daily pill containers to help you keep track of whether you've taken your daily doses.
- Refill your daily pill container on the same day every week to avoid doubling up on doses.
- Timer caps for pill bottles can help keep track of when you last took your medications, although these need to be purchased separately.

Other medication tips include:

- Keep an updated list of all the medications you take on hand. This will allow any healthcare professionals you meet to know exactly what medicines you are taking.
- Don't share or give away prescribed medications. This practice is illegal and dangerous and can harm those who take your medications without a valid prescription.
- Take extra medication with you when traveling in case you stay longer than planned.
- When traveling by airplane, always pack medication in your carry-on bag to prevent damage from changes in temperature and air pressure. Also, you'll have it on hand if your luggage is lost or damaged.

Some common questions about taking medications can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/medicines/>

Finding a pharmacist

You can find a pharmacy near you by searching: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

Exercise

Regular exercise offers a number of benefits for our health. Better fitness levels reduce complications when having any procedure. This allows you to leave hospital and return to your normal quality of life more quickly. Having an active lifestyle is good for your health and if you are normally an active person it is important to keep that up before your procedure. People with low activity levels can improve their fitness levels within as little as four weeks prior to their procedure. This gives you an opportunity to get fitter before your procedure and improve your chances of a better and quicker recovery. Your GP or clinical nurse specialist may be able to offer you personalised advice for keeping active while you await your treatment or surgery. Further information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>

Improve your health

Smoking

Smoking is bad for your health. Stopping smoking offers a wide range of benefits for your mental and physical health, including:

- You will be at less risk of smoking related diseases such as heart disease, lung cancer and chronic bronchitis.
- Stopping smoking lets you breathe more easily
- Stopping smoking gives you more energy
- You may feel less stressed
- Stopping smoking improves smell and taste
- A smoke free home will help to protect loved ones

Stopping altogether or reducing the amount you smoke while you await surgery can help you recover more quickly.

More information about smoking cessation can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/>
Find your local Stop Smoking Service: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service/>

Weight management – healthy eating

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is an important part of maintaining good health and can help you feel your best. This means eating a wide variety of foods in the right proportions and consuming the right amount of food and drink to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

Information on how to help you and your family eat better and move more, including a food scanner app to reveal a range of healthier food swaps can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/>

Weight management

If you are overweight, losing weight has many health benefits.

Making small, simple changes to what and how much you are eating and drinking can really help you lose the pounds. Further information and NHS weight loss plans can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/>

Alcohol

Cutting back on alcohol can be an effective way to improve your health, boost your energy and lose weight. Any reduction in the amount of alcohol you drink every week will be beneficial. Advice on reducing your alcohol intake can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/>

If you feel your alcohol intake is becoming an issue the first step is to get help, advice and support. The NHS live well website has further information here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/alcohol-support/>

Alcoholics Anonymous have resources that you can access via telephone, email, website and live chat. Information can be found at: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Good mental health

Good mental health is as important as good physical health. It is important that we recognise when we are stressed, anxious, low in mood, or depressed.

Further information about self help and ways to improve your mental wellbeing, from expert advice to tools to work out what support you need visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

If you feel you are having a mental health crisis please contact your GP who can advise and direct you to the most appropriate care.

Other resources offering mental health support:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

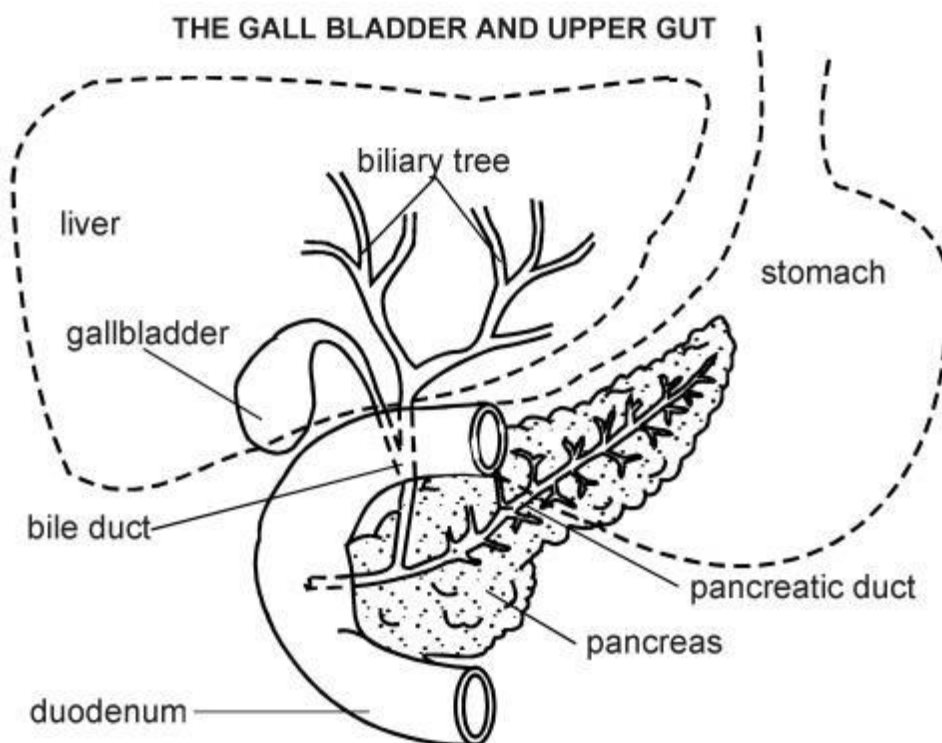
<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Introduction

Having an ERCP - Endoscopic retrograde cholangio pancreatogram

An ERCP is an examination that uses a type of X-ray. During the procedure, a flexible tube (endoscope) with a camera on the end is put into your mouth, down your food pipe (oesophagus) and into your stomach and the first part of your small intestine.

An ERCP allows your doctor to examine and treat conditions of the biliary system (liver, gall bladder, biliary tree, pancreas, pancreatic ducts and bile ducts).



You might have an ERCP if you have:

- yellow skin or eyes and itchy skin (jaundice)
- liver blood tests that need more investigation, and you have pain in your abdomen (tummy)
- had a CT or ultrasound scan that shows a blockage in your bile duct or pancreatic ducts

Blockages can be caused by stones, narrowing of the bile duct and growths or cancer of the pancreas or bile duct. An ERCP can also be used to offer treatment to both the bile duct and the pancreas, especially to treat jaundice. This is a less invasive option than open surgery. The doctor can also take samples of your cells through brushings or biopsies during an ERCP. These will be examined in the laboratory to help diagnose any problems you are having.

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During an ERCP, small plastic or metal tubes called stents can be put into the bile duct. This allows the bile to drain into the intestine. Stents can also be put into the small intestine (duodenum). This helps people who have a blockage affecting the flow of food out of their stomach.

An ERCP can sometimes be used to help remove pancreatic stones or to put a stent into a narrowed pancreatic duct. This can be helpful in dealing with pain.

Guidance for Patients

Whilst awaiting your ERCP procedure, reducing any alcohol intake and altering your diet to include at least 5 portions of fresh fruit and vegetables a day and include wholegrains such as wholemeal bread, oats and brown rice; this helps to lower the cholesterol in your body. By doing this it could help alleviate any symptoms you may be experiencing as there seems to be a link between having high cholesterol and developing gallstones (which can lead to infections and acute pancreatitis), therefore you should try to avoid eating too many fatty foods with a high cholesterol content.

Remember, if you've had acute pancreatitis caused by drinking too much alcohol, you should avoid it completely.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your condition is deteriorating including:

- Suddenly getting severe pain in the centre of your abdomen (tummy)
- Abdominal pain lasting more than 8 hours
- Abdominal pain so intense that you can't find a position to relieve it
- Feeling or being sick
- Diarrhoea
- A high temperature of 38C or more (fever)

Please contact your GP who can assess your clinical condition and how it may have deteriorated to advise on any additional actions which may support you.

If you suddenly develop severe abdominal pain you should attend your nearest Emergency Department.

Contact Us

Outpatient appointment line:

Telephone: 01625 663333

ecn-tr.myplannedcare@nhs.net