Endoscopy Unit

Having an Oesophageal Stent insertion

Information for patients
Your doctor has recommended that you have an **Oesophageal Stent Insertion**. This leaflet will explain the procedure and what to expect on the day of your test. If you have further questions, please ask the nurses or doctors on the ward or discuss them with a member of the endoscopy staff on the day of your procedure.

**What is Insertion of an Oesophageal Stent?**

The oesophagus (gullet) is a muscular tube that pushes food from the mouth to the stomach. If the oesophagus gets narrowed, swallowing becomes difficult and food intake can be reduced. Placement of a specially designed metal, mesh like tube called a stent across the narrowed or blocked area of the oesophagus can improve swallowing and allow food to enter the stomach.
Why am I having an Oesophageal Stent insertion?

Prior to the insertion of an oesophageal stent other tests such as endoscopy (camera test) or a barium swallow (x-ray test of the oesophagus) have shown that your oesophagus has become blocked or narrowed. Your doctor will have discussed with you the likely cause of the blockage. There are different treatments available for people with a blocked oesophagus. A stent insertion has been proposed as the best treatment option for you. You should make sure that you have had the opportunity to discuss your treatment options with your doctor. If you feel uncomfortable about having this procedure carried out then you can decide against it. Your decision will be fully respected and you doctor will be happy to discuss alternative options.

Will I be asleep for my stent insertion?

An oesophageal stent insertion is normally carried out under sedation. Sedation is not a general anaesthetic and will not put you to sleep, however, it may make you feel relaxed and possibly drowsy. A painkiller injection is normally given along with your sedation which will help you to feel more comfortable during the procedure. Local anaesthetic spray may also be given to numb the back of your throat.
What preparation will I need?

Some patients will come from home for their stent insertion and will be prepared for their procedure in the endoscopy unit. If you are already an inpatient the ward nurses will prepare you for your procedure.

If you are coming from home you should expect to stay in hospital overnight for observation. You will need to bring an overnight bag and any medication that you take with you. Please avoid bringing valuables into the hospital.

You will be asked to **not have anything to eat and drink**, prior to the procedure, to ensure your stomach is empty of food. If you are coming from home your appointment letter will tell you what time you need to fast from.

What are the risks of having an Oesophageal Stent Insertion?

There are three complications directly linked to stent insertion:

1. **Stent migration**: The stent may not remain in place, moving either above or below the narrowing. The risk of this happening is typically about 5% - 15%, depending on the stent used and the location of the narrowing

2. **Haemorrhage**: It is possible to cause the oesophagus to bleed. The risk of this is happening soon after the placement of a stent is low, probably below 1%

3. **Perforation**: It is possible to cause a tear in the lining of the oesophagus. The risk of this happening is in the region of 1% - 2%

4. Other rare complications include damage to loose teeth, crowns or to dental bridgework.
What will happen on the day of the test?

When you arrive at the endoscopy unit your personal details will be checked. The assessment nurse will check your medical history and any allergies. You will be able to ask any questions that you have about the test.

If you are not coming from a ward the nurse will ask you to change into a hospital gown and insert a cannula (a thin plastic tube) into a vein in your arm or hand. The cannula will be used during the test to give your sedation.

If you are coming from home there may be a wait before your procedure as we will need to confirm that a bed is available for you, after the procedure. The nursing staff will keep you informed about when a bed may be available.

What happens in the procedure room?

You will be greeted by two nurses, a radiographer and the doctor performing the procedure; they will remain with you during the test. You will then be asked to remove any dentures or glasses and lay on an x-ray table on your left hand side. You will be given some oxygen via a small cannula placed in your nostril. All patients pulse and oxygen levels are monitored by a probe placed on your finger during the test. Some doctors like to numb the back of the throat with an anaesthetic spray before the procedure starts. Sedation will then be given to you to make you comfortable during the procedure. The drugs given are a combination of a sedative (for example; Midazolam) to relax you and a painkiller (Fentanyl). Before the test starts a plastic mouthpiece is placed between your teeth to keep your mouth slightly open.
The doctor will decide on the day of the procedure the best way to place your oesophageal stent. This may be done with or without an endoscope (camera). Sometimes, the doctor will decide to use a catheter (plastic tube) and guide wire only.

X-ray guidance is always used to ensure the stent is in the correct position.

**Please note:** all hospitals in the trust are teaching hospitals and it may be that a trainee endoscopist performs your procedure under the direct supervision of a consultant or registrar.

**What happens after the test?**

You will be transferred to the recovery room after the test. It is important to tell the nursing staff if you have any pain. You will have your pulse and blood pressure monitored to ensure there have been no complications. You will then return to the ward.

You may experience some discomfort as the stent expands. In the majority of cases the discomfort resolves within 24 - 48 hours. If you are experiencing any pain, please let the nurses in the endoscopy recovery room or the ward nurses know as they will be able to organise for you to have further pain relief.

**How soon can I eat and drink?**

Most patients will be able to drink fluids within a few hours of having their stent placed.
For the first 24 hours you should have fluids only; over the next few days you should try to gradually increase the consistency of your food to a soft moist diet.

When you have had your oesophageal stent placed the endoscopy unit will provide a patient information leaflet that will give you advice and information about eating after you have had your stent placed. This information leaflet also provides general advice about your stent and has contact numbers in case of problems with your stent.

If you do not receive the booklet “Eating when you have an oesophageal stent”, please contact the endoscopy unit at St James’s.

You may be given antacid medication to stop you from developing heartburn.

This leaflet has been designed as general guide to your test. If after reading this you have any questions that you feel have not been answered, please contact the endoscopy department on the number below.
Contact numbers

Administration team: for any enquiry about your appointment including cancellation. Also, contact this number if you require an interpreter or transport.

Telephone: *(0113) 206 7961*
Monday - Friday, 9.00 am to 4.00 pm

Nursing team: please contact this number if you would like advice on your medication or any other medical question or worry.

Telephone: *(0113) 392 2585*
Monday - Friday, 9.00 am to 4.00 pm