

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)

You are scheduled for an endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP). The ERCP is a valuable tool that helps your doctor diagnose diseases of the liver, gall bladder, bile ducts, and pancreas. ERCP is done by passing a flexible instrument (endoscope) through your throat and into your stomach and duodenum. Through the endoscope, your doctor will be able to see your gastrointestinal tract. Special dye will also be injected so that x-ray pictures may be taken. The procedure will be done in the Diagnostic Radiology Department.

Preparation

- Do not eat or drink after midnight on the day of the procedure.
- Wear a hospital gown.
- If you wear dentures, remove them before the procedure.
- Let your doctor and nurse know if you are allergic to any medications or iodine dyes. Your doctor will let you know if you may take your regular medications on the day of the test.
- If you have had barium x-rays within the week of the test, notify your doctor. (Barium may interfere with the results of this test.)
- If you are an outpatient, arrange for someone to drive you home after the test.

Procedure

- An I.V. (intravenous line) will be placed in your hand. You will get fluids and medications through this line.
- A nurse will numb the back of your throat with an anesthetic. This may taste bitter and make your tongue and throat feel swollen. A sedative will be given through your I.V. to help you relax.
- You will be asked to lie on your left side with your left arm behind you. You will need to be in this position so that the x-rays can be taken.
- The doctor will then pass the endoscope through your mouth, and into your stomach and duodenum. The tube will not interfere with your breathing. Take slow, deep breaths during the procedure.

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- During the test, the doctor will inject a special dye through the endoscope. This dye allows x-rays to be taken of your gastrointestinal tract. You may feel discomfort in your abdomen when the dye is injected.
 - When the doctor has taken enough x-rays to make a diagnosis, the procedure is complete.

After the procedure

- Because your throat may be numb, do not eat or drink for at least 1 hour after the procedure. You could choke if you eat or drink too soon. Start with water, then try other liquids. If you can swallow easily, you may have solid food.
- Your throat may feel sore when the anesthetic wears off. This discomfort may last a few days.
- You will feel drowsy from the medications, so a nurse will help you in the recovery area.
- You may feel bloated and pass a soft bowel movement because of the air and dye used during the test.
- If you are an outpatient, arrange for someone to drive you home. Do not drive until the day after this procedure.

If you have questions about the procedure, please ask. Your nurse and doctor are ready to assist you at all times.

Special instructions

Notify your doctor or nurse immediately if you have a lot of pain, difficulty breathing, or spit up blood.

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