

WHAT IS ERCP?

ERCP stands for 'Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography'. ERCP is highly specialised technique that uses images from a dedicated camera and X-ray to view the bile and pancreatic ducts. For ERCP, your gastroenterologist uses a flexible lighted tube called an "endoscope." The endoscope, or scope, is about as thick as your index finger. It goes through your mouth into your stomach and the first part of the small intestine, called the "duodenum." Then the doctor puts a very small, flexible plastic tube through the scope and injects some dye that shows up on X-rays. This procedure allows your doctor to see the ducts and how well they are working.

Why is ERCP done?

ERCP is a highly specialised procedure. Generally, ERCP is performed to relief blockage "obstruction" of the bile or pancreatic duct due to stones, lesions, or tumours.

ERCP PREPARATION

- You should not eat or drink for at least 6 hours before an ERCP to make sure you have an empty stomach, which is necessary for a safe examination.
- The morning of your procedure, you may take medications your doctor told you are allowed. Take them with just a sip of water only.
- You might need to stop taking certain medicines before surgery. These include blood thinners, supplements, and medicines that affect your immune system. Please contact Launceston Endoscopy Clinic before your procedure is planned.
- Tell us if you have a shellfish or iodine allergy.
- You will need someone to drive you home from the procedure. You may also need someone to stay with you overnight.

What to Expect During the ERCP

Your anaesthetist will administer IV sedation. You will be lying on a table for the procedure which allows xrays to be taken. The Endoscopist will insert the endoscope through your mouth, then down your throat (oesophagus) to the stomach and the first part of your small intestine, the duodenum. The endoscope does not affect your breathing, and you might even fall asleep during the procedure. The procedure usually lasts thirty minutes to an hour depending on the situation.

Possible ERCP complications:

ERCP is generally safe and well tolerated. The most common problem after ERCP is a condition called "pancreatitis." This happens when the duct to the pancreas is irritated by the X-ray dye or small plastic tube used in ERCP. This can cause abdominal pain that gets worse instead of better after the procedure. It is important for you to know the early signs of possible complications. Call our office immediately if you have any of the problems below after ERCP; severe belly pain, fever, chills, vomiting, blood in your stool.

Please note that this document is intended to provide a general overview of an endoscopic procedure. It is not intended to serve as a substitute for a consultation or professional medical care.



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