

Additional Notes




Having an Oesophageal Stent

The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,
Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 7DW
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Date: **July 2023** Version: **Five** Review date: **July 2026** Ref: **049/22**

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17. Useful Organisations

Macmillan - is a national charity that provides information for patients and their families. They provide very good information booklets that are free to patients.

www.macmillan.org.uk Telephone: **0808 808 00 00**

Oesophageal Patients Association - is a national charity formed by former oesophageal cancer patients to share experiences, give advice and support. They are able to offer over the telephone support and advice and also produce written advice.

www.opa.org.uk Telephone: **0121 704 9860**

The Digestive Disorders Foundation (CORE) - is a charity for research and information on digestive disorders.

www.corecharity.org.uk Telephone: **020 74860341**

Other useful web sites

www.bbc.co.uk/health/cancer

www.cancerresearchuk.org

www.dorsetcancer.nhs.uk

No responsibility can be accepted for the content of any of the information obtained from the internet.

Where is the Endoscopy Department?

The Endoscopy Department is situated on the Ground Floor, in the West Wing of the hospital.

- Stent - A soft strong mesh tube that is narrow (about the thickness of a pencil) but when positioned in the oesophagus expands to press against the narrow area making it easier to swallow
- Oesophagus - the gullet or tube that joins the mouth to the stomach
- Endoscopy - The name of the department in the hospital where the stent is put in. An endoscopy is also the name for a procedure where an instrument (called a gastroscope) is inserted. This is a flexible tube with a bright light and a minute camera at the tip that transmits pictures of the inside of your oesophagus and stomach. This is used to position the stent

16. Useful phone numbers

Specialist Nurse - Sarah Trickett - **0300 019 4340**
Royal Bournemouth Hospital

Emma Chester and Hannah Leadley - **0300 019 8739**
Poole Hospital

Dietitian - **0300 019 4732** Royal Bournemouth Hospital
0300 019 2203 Poole Hospital

Endoscopy - **0300 019 4667**
Royal Bournemouth Hospital, Mon-Fri 8am-6pm
0300 019 2772
Poole Hospital, Mon-Fri 8am-6pm

1. Introduction

This booklet is designed to be practical and informative.

Please read all of the information or you may miss important instructions.

If you have any questions regarding the information or instructions in this booklet, please call the department on the number below and a member of endoscopy staff will be please to help you.

If you cannot attend your appointment date it is important that you telephone as soon as possible so that we may offer your date to another patient.

The numbers to call are:

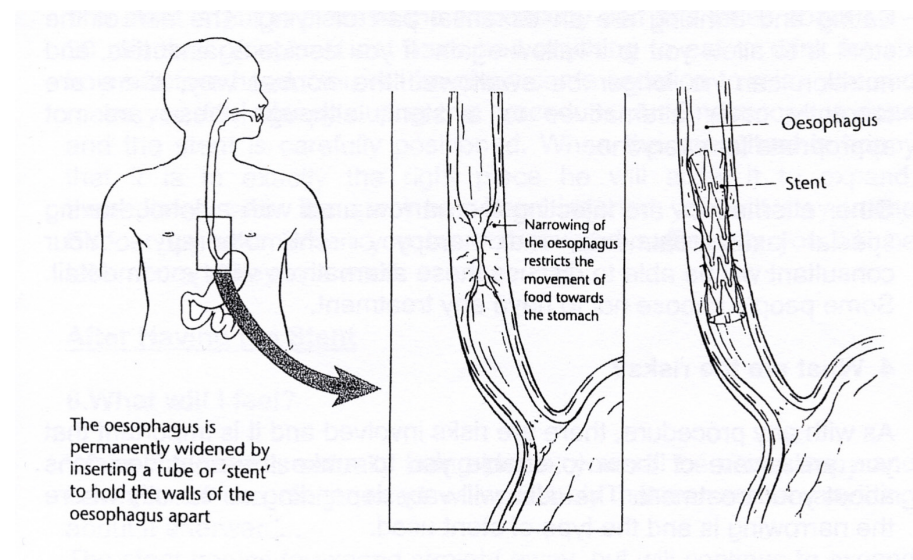
0300 019 4667 or **0300 019 4638**

If you have any queries regarding your endoscopy and would like to look around the Endoscopy Unit, you can now do so, by appointment, with our Endoscopy Nurse Specialist between 8am-9am every Monday.

The waiting facilities in the Endoscopy Department are limited, so we ask that you do not arrive until your actual appointment time.

2. What is an Oesophageal stent?

An Oesophageal stent is a specially designed plastic or metal mesh-like tube. It is designed to be placed in the oesophagus (gullet) across a narrowed area. When it is being positioned, it is thin (about the thickness of a pencil). When the doctor has positioned it in the right place, it then expands to press against the gullet to make the narrowed area wider. Once the stent is in place, it usually remains there permanently, although some stents can be removed if necessary.



- Put plenty of spread on your bread e.g. butter, margarine, mayonnaise and salad cream.
- Having alcohol before a meal can help to stimulate your appetite. Check with your GP first to ensure there is no reason why you should not have alcohol.
- Try not to get out of the habit of eating- you need to eat to stimulate your appetite.
- Contact the dietitian if you are concerned by any weight loss.

14. Do you have heartburn?

The following may help you to reduce your symptoms:

- Try to keep to a regular eating pattern. Eating little and often may help.
- Sit upright to eat. Try not to bend down or lie down for one hour after eating.
- Take small mouthfuls of food, eat slowly and chew food well.
- Avoid tight fitting belts or clothing.
- Try to sleep in a semi-upright position using extra pillows.
- Try not to eat too late at night and leave at least an hour before going to bed
- If your symptoms do not improve, ask your doctor if they can prescribe some medicine to help relieve heartburn.

15. Glossary

- Supplements - Drinks, usually in cartons, bottles or as a powder to be mixed with milk that provides calories, protein, vitamins etc. to help meet dietary needs when you cannot eat normally. Some can be prescribed by your doctor, some are available over the counter in your pharmacy

- Mix any powdered supplements thoroughly, as lumps of powder can block the stent
- Introduce new foods gradually, beginning with small amounts

12. What should I do if I think the stent has blocked?

- Don't panic. Staying calm will help you deal with the problem
- Stop eating - don't try and force it down
- Try to drink small amounts - warm water or fizzy drinks can be helpful and walk around
- If food remains stuck, contact your GP, specialist nurse or the Endoscopy department. (Out of hours GP/ Emergency Department).
- If the blockage does not go, you may need to be admitted to hospital and possibly need another endoscopy.

13. Have you lost weight?

The following may help you avoid further weight loss:

- Have nourishing drinks between your meals and at bedtime e.g. Milk, Horlicks, Ovaltine, hot chocolate, Complan and Build-up. (Ensure powder thoroughly mixed into liquid)
- Try to make your food and drinks as nourishing as possible - add extra cheese, butter, milk, cream and sugar where appropriate.
- Aim to have 1 pint of full fat milk a day e.g. in drinks, on cereal and in desserts.
- Have snacks between meals e.g. biscuits or chocolate or yoghurt without dried fruit/fruit or nuts, grated cheese and crackers.
- Have a milky pudding once a day e.g. tinned rice, custard, sago or smooth full-fat yoghurt.

3. Why should I have a stent?

A stent is recommended to people who have a narrowed area in their oesophagus (gullet) and who have difficulty swallowing. This can be distressing for you and those around you. Often you may have had increasing difficulty in getting food down. This often gets more difficult until swallowing fluids becomes a problem. This is when a stent may help.

The purpose of a stent is to widen your oesophagus enough to enable you to eat soft food and drink again.

4. Is there an alternative?

Having a stent put in is your choice, and it is important that you are happy with the decision to have one. Whatever you decide, your decision will be respected.

Eating and drinking are an essential part of living. The aim of the stent is to allow you to swallow more easily again. If you decide against this, and nutrition can no longer be swallowed the normal way there are alternatives but these are not appropriate for everybody. Your consultant will be able to discuss these with you. Some people decide not to have any treatment.

5. What are the risks?

As with any procedure, there are risks involved. The risks will vary depending on exactly where the narrowing is and the type of stent used.

Rarely, a little bleeding can occur during the procedure, particularly if your oesophagus needs stretching.



Very rarely, the placement of the stent may cause a small tear (perforation) in the oesophagus. The covering of the stent may close this off, however you may need to stay in hospital.

Also very rarely, the stent may slip out of place, causing pain or difficult swallowing again, but if it happens the stent can usually be safely repositioned.

If any of these complications occur, your doctor will discuss with you the options available, which will vary dependant on your individual circumstances.

6. How is the stent put in?

The stent is put in place in the Endoscopy department and takes about 15 - 20 minutes. You must not have anything to eat or drink for six hours before your appointment. You will be given some sedation to relax you and make you feel sleepy during the procedure. A local anaesthetic spray may be used to numb the back of your throat. Your breathing and oxygen levels will be monitored throughout. The stent will be placed with direct visualisation (endoscopic) or x-ray guidance. You may have had a gastroscopy and this is very similar. When the consultant is happy that it is in exactly the right place he will allow it to expand. After the stent has been inserted you will be taken to the recovery ward on your bed or trolley, where you will be looked after for a while before being taken to the ward to stay overnight or allowed home.

Because you may be able to eat some foods that are not listed, it is best to ask your dietician for advice.

11. What else should I do to avoid problems after having a stent?

The two most important things are:

1. Take small mouthfuls and chew for longer than usual
2. Make sure your teeth are in good order. If you have dentures, make sure that they fit correctly. If you find it difficult to chew, have foods that are already soft

Other things that will help are:

- If you take large tablets, you may be able to crush them (check with your pharmacist or GP first or better still ask your doctor or pharmacist for liquid medicines)
- Drink during and after meals, to clear the stent of any food particles. Warm fluids may help the most but any fluid is beneficial
- Sit up straight when eating. This allows gravity to help food go down. Sit upright for half an hour after meals
- Cut food into small bits before eating and chew well. It is important that you don't swallow hard lumps of food that could block the stent
- Have plenty of gravy, custard or cream with your food to make it more moist and help it go down more easily
- Try to relax when eating and do not rush your meals, eat at your own pace don't rush to keep up with others
- It may help to eat smaller amounts more often - six small meals/snacks rather than trying to have three big meals
- Don't be afraid to spit out lumps that can't be chewed

Snack:

- Milky drink with a soft biscuit or smooth yoghurt

Lunch:

- Macaroni cheese / fish in a sauce/ smooth soup.
Milk pudding / sponge pudding with custard or ice cream.

Snack:

- Milky drink e.g. hot chocolate with a soft piece of cake

Evening meal:

- Tender meat or chicken stew with soft vegetables and mash potato or shepherds pie.
Smooth yoghurt, trifle or mousse.

Snack:

- Hot milky drink and a biscuit
(soften by dunking into your drink)

Additional comments

Because some people can swallow more easily than others, the dietary advice will also vary from one person to another. The following foods may be safe for people who can still swallow quite easily:

- Toasted brown bread (small portions without the crusts) - brown is less sticky than white.
- Runny egg yolk and soft poached eggs (scrambled egg and cooked egg whites can be too 'rubbery' and may block the stent)
- Melba toast and bread sticks (small portions and well-crunched up)
- Crisps that dissolve and melt in the mouth e.g. cheese puffs, skips, quavers

After having the stent

7. What will I feel?

When the stent is actually being put in, you will be very sleepy and because of the drugs used you will probably not remember anything about it afterwards.

The stent begins to expand straight away, but will continue to expand for up to 48 hours. During this time, you may experience some discomfort or pain. If you do feel pain, it is important you let us know so it can be controlled with painkillers.

After 48 hours, the discomfort or pain usually lessens.

Many people do not need to take any more painkillers, but some people continue to experience a pain that needs longer-term painkilling medicine. Whilst in hospital, your doctors can see what pain relief you have needed, so that when you go home, you can be given a further supply.

Coughing, hiccups or vomiting should have no effect on the stent.

Because the stent is keeping the oesophagus open, it can allow acid from the stomach to splash back into the oesophagus. You may be prescribed tablets to reduce the amount of acid in the stomach to overcome this.

8. How long will I have to stay in hospital?

Everyone is different, but most people have the stent put in and then go home that day or 24 to 48 hours later. Occasionally it is necessary to stay a few days longer. Before going home your doctors will want to make sure you are comfortable and that you are managing to drink.

9. What should I eat?

If a stent is being considered, it is likely that you have already been having increasing difficulty in swallowing food. This often begins with foods like roast or stringy meat, or bread but can get worse

until even swallowing fluids is difficult. Having a stent put in will enable you to eat a wider range of foods, but you need to take care to avoid some foods that may cause your stent to block.

The dietitian may see you to ensure you are having an adequate diet. She may also recommend nutritional supplements if necessary and advice on how to get further supplies.

Following insertion of the stent only fluids should be consumed for the first 24 hours. After this, foods with a soft, moist consistency can be introduced.

Type of food	Most easily managed	Take care with
Meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minced or tender cuts of meat with gravy or a sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tough, stringing, chunky meat Fatty, gristly pieces
Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flaked or mashed fish with a sauce e.g. parsley (poach, boil or steam) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish with bones Dry fish
Type of food	Most easily managed	Take care with
Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground nuts mixed with plenty of liquid e.g ground almonds in runny ready brek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chopped, flaked or whole nuts Peanut butter
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrambled Poached Soft boiled Omelette Soufflés Egg custard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard boiled Fried egg white

Bread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day old bread Bread softened in stews or soups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, doughy bread Crusty bread or Toast Crackers Crispbreads Rice Cakes
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cottage cheese Cream cheese/cheese spreads Grated hard cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chunks of cheese Stringy melted cheese
Cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use plenty of milk to ensure the cereal is soft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cereals with nuts and dried fruits Coarse cereals e.g shredded wheat
Potatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mashed with milk, butter, cream or grated cheese added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard chips or roast potatoes Crisps All potato skins
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft, well cooked Mashed if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chunks of raw or stringy vegetables e.g. celery Salad Sweetcorn
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft fruit, peeled Tinned and stewed fruit Fruit juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit skins Pithy or stringy fruit e.g orange Dried fruit

10. One-day meal plan

If you are struggling with meal ideas, the following suggestions may be helpful:

Breakfast:

- Cereal or ready brek with full-fat milk. Tea, coffee or smooth orange juice or both