Argon plasma coagulation (APC)

Information for patients
Endoscopy
Argon Plasma Coagulation (APC)

The aim of this booklet is to help you to understand your treatment and what to expect. We hope it will lessen any anxiety you may have, answer some of your questions and offer some practical advice. It is by no means intended to be comprehensive. Everyone responds differently to treatment and will therefore require varying amounts of information. If this booklet does not answer all your questions please feel free to contact your clinical nurse specialist or endoscopy unit for more information.

Endoscopy Unit, Northern General Hospital

- 0114 226 9174 or
- 0114 226 9730

Endoscopy Unit, Royal Hallamshire Hospital

- 0114 271 2990

Reasons for argon plasma coagulation treatment

- You may have been receiving regular endoscopies for a particular medical condition and irregular cells have been detected requiring treatment.
- You may have a narrowing in your oesophagus (gullet), causing difficulty with swallowing. This treatment can be used to remove some of the blockage and ease swallowing.
- You may have a vascular abnormality in your colon (bowel) causing bleeding. This treatment can be used to coagulate (seal) the vessels and stop the bleeding.

A full explanation of the treatment will be given by your medical team but please ask if you are uncertain.
What is argon plasma coagulation treatment?

Argon plasma coagulation (or APC), is, in very simple terms, a probe used to cauterise (burn) the surface lining of your oesophagus or colon.

Where is it performed?

The treatment is performed in the endoscopy unit.

How is it performed?

- The treatment is usually performed as an outpatient, with you attending the endoscopy unit and then returning home the same day.

- If APC is used to treat your oesophagus, you should not eat or drink for at least 6 hours before the procedure. The treatment is usually given with a local anaesthetic (throat spray) and sedation which makes you feel relaxed.

- If APC is used to treat your colon, you may be required to take some bowel preparation the day before the treatment. Alternatively, in some cases an enema will be given when you attend for your treatment. The treatment is usually given with Entonox (gas and air) and/or sedation which makes you feel relaxed.

- APC is performed using an endoscope which is similar to having an endoscopy. The procedure takes about 15 minutes to perform.

Further visits to endoscopy for treatment may be required, depending on the medical reason for the treatment, but this should be explained by the team caring for you. If you are uncertain please feel free to ask your doctor or nurse specialist.
Are there any risks or complications?

As with any procedure there are possible risks or complications and these will be explained before you sign your consent form.

- Discomfort following treatment may happen and you may need to take simple painkillers.
- Bleeding
- Perforation

Is there anything I should be aware of afterwards?

- You will be cared for within the endoscopy unit following your treatment and then later discharged home. If you have received some sedation you will need someone to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours.
- If the treatment has been to your oesophagus you will be able to eat and drink 2 hours after treatment and will be given your first drink in the endoscopy unit before leaving.
- You may feel some discomfort after the treatment but drinking and simple painkillers should relieve this problem.

If you have any queries or concerns please contact us on:

(0114) ..............................