

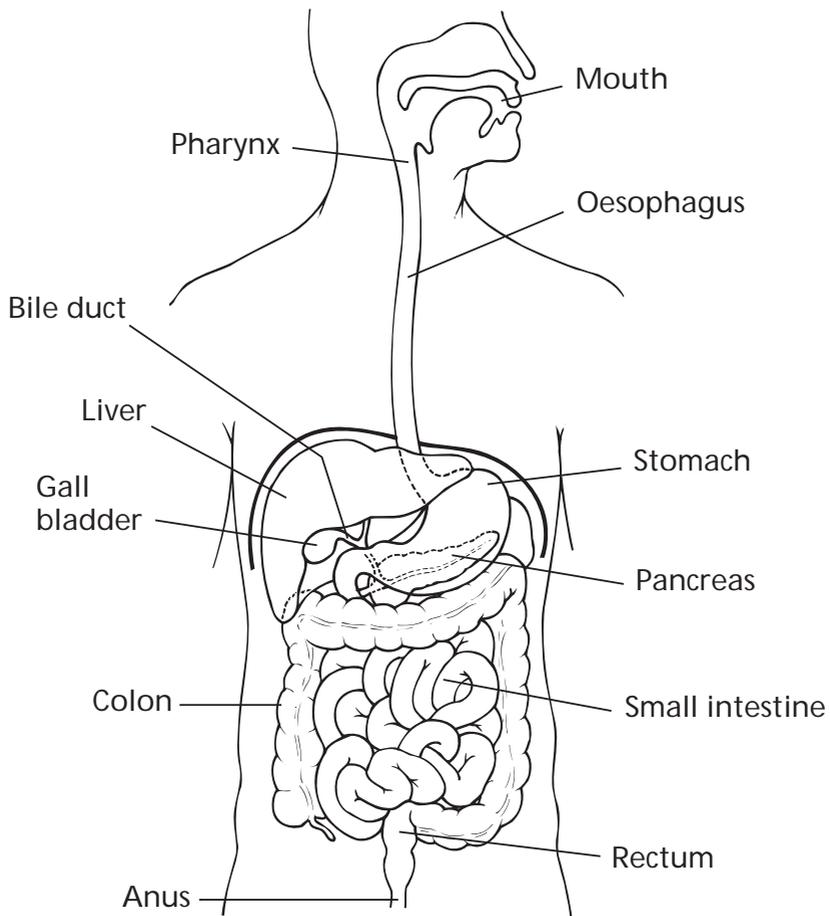
# Oesophageal stent

**i** **Information for patients**  
Upper GI Surgery



## Why do I need a stent?

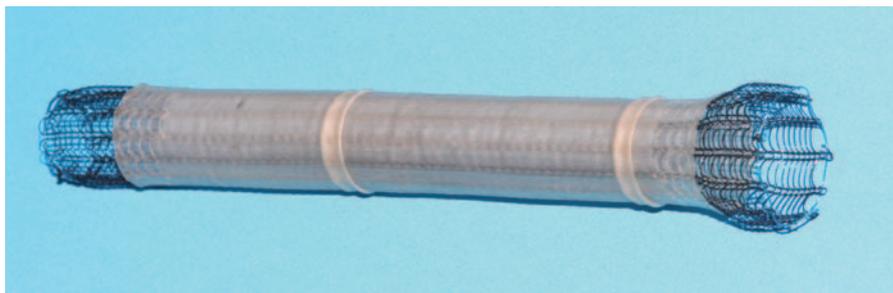
Tests have shown that there is a narrowing or blockage in your oesophagus (gullet) and, as a result, you have been experiencing problems with your swallowing. The cause for this will have been explained by your medical team. A stent has therefore been recommended by your medical team to help widen the narrowing, as other endoscopic treatments may not be as helpful.



**Position of the oesophagus (gullet) and surrounding structures**

## What is a stent?

A stent is a metal mesh tube inserted into your oesophagus. The stent is placed across the narrowing that is causing your swallowing problems. The length of the stent is variable depending on your requirements. Once in place it expands, widening the narrow area allowing food and drink to pass through more easily.



## Where is it performed?

Stenting is performed in the X-ray department at the Northern General Hospital, D Floor, Huntsman Building.

## How is it performed?

- Admission to hospital following the procedure is required. Be prepared for at least a one night stay.
- You should **not** eat or drink for at least 6 hours before the procedure.
- Once the procedure has been explained to you by the medical team, you will be required to sign a consent form for the stent insertion to be performed. Feel free to ask if you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure.
- A cannula (needle) will be placed in the back of your hand so sedation can be given to help you relax. This makes the procedure easier to perform.
- You will be required to wear a nasal oxygen mask for a short period after the procedure.
- **X-ray controlled insertion.** A fine wire is passed through your mouth into your gullet to identify the narrowed area. The stent then follows the same route and is placed across the narrowed area under X-ray control. The stent then expands over a couple of days making it easier for you to eat and drink.
- Following stent insertion you will recover from the sedation in the X-ray department and then be returned to the ward area.

## **Are there any risks or complications?**

As with any procedure there are possible risks and complications. Before signing your consent form you are made aware of the potential problems, for example:

- Following stent insertion you will need to adjust your diet. You will be given guidance from a dietitian and nurse specialist.
- You may experience discomfort as the stent expands. Medication may be required to control the pain. The time this lasts can vary.
- You may experience heartburn / reflux. Medication will be given to prevent this being a problem.
- Movement of the stent can occasionally occur. If this happens further stenting may be required.
- Bleeding
- Perforation: damage to the inside of the oesophagus which forms a hole / tear.

## **What will I need to be aware of following a stent?**

- You should not drink for the first 2 hours after the stent has been inserted. It takes time for your stent to expand and the sedation to wear off.
- Commence drinks and build up slowly to a very soft diet.
- Discomfort and nausea can sometimes be experienced. You will need to inform nursing staff so medication can be given to relieve any problems.
- Acid reflux can sometimes occur after stent insertion. Medication to control the amount of acid you produce will be given, with some for you to take home. Sleeping upright in bed will also help and we normally suggest a couple of pillows to help raise your upper body.

## What dietary changes do I need to make?

A dietitian will review your nutritional intake and provide you with information based on your specific dietary needs, including the foods that you need to be careful with and suitable alternatives.

Below are some basic dietary tips:

- Take your time when eating and eat in an upright position.
- Chew food well and remove any lumps or gristle that you cannot chew.
- If you have dentures it is useful to wear them to make chewing easier.
- Sipping nourishing fluids whilst eating can help food pass down through the stent.
- It is best to avoid certain foods such as tough lumps of meat, white bread and stringy fruits and vegetables. Your dietitian will discuss this in more detail with you.

## What will happen when I am discharged?

You will be given medications to take home including:

- Antacid
- Painkillers
- Anti-sickness medication if needed.  
(If you are unsure please ask nursing staff before leaving the ward.)

## Contact details

Contact numbers for your Clinical Nurse Specialist are detailed below:

- Gill Troy: **0114 305 2407**
- Jo Whitham: **0114 271 4054**

## What if my stent becomes blocked?

You may notice that your swallowing changes and makes eating and drinking difficult or uncomfortable. If you experience a sudden difficulty in swallowing, your stent may be blocked.

Basic tips:

- **Don't panic** – it sometimes happens.
- Drink plenty of fizzy or warm drinks to try and clear the blockage.
- Walk around as this can help sometimes.
- If swallowing doesn't improve following this, ring for further advice:

Telephone: .....

Monday to Friday (8.00am - 6.00pm) contact Gill Troy or Jo Whitham.  
During the evenings and at weekends, please contact your GP.

Occasionally swallowing difficulties are gradual and if this happens you will need to contact your Clinical Nurse Specialist for advice.



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