



# A guide to...

# Having a Gastroscopy and Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA)

## *Patient Information*

### How to contact us

Booking and interpreting queries – Please call the number on your appointment letter

Clinical queries – Watford: 01923 436095 / Hemel Hempstead: 01442 287968

Any other query – Watford: 01923 217530 / Hemel Hempstead: 01442 287681

**If you are taking blood thinning medications such as warfarin, clopidogrel, ticagrelor, dabigatran, rivaroxaban or apixaban, please call the department on the number on your appointment letter to notify us.**

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## What is a Gastroscopy and Radio Frequency Ablation?

Gastroscopy is an investigation that allows us to look directly at your gullet (oesophagus), stomach and the upper part of the intestine (duodenum). A long flexible camera is passed through your mouth, down the back of your throat into your stomach. Radio frequency ablation is a technique whereby a catheter is passed down beside the flexible camera. And the surface layers of abnormal tissue are heated by radio waves. The purpose of this is to destroy the abnormal tissue.

### Preparation

This investigation must be done on an empty stomach. If you have a morning appointment you must not eat anything after midnight the night before but can drink sips of water up to 6.30am on the morning of the investigation. If you have an afternoon appointment you must not eat anything after 6.30am but can drink sips of water up to 11.30am. If you are taking diabetic medication, you can contact your GP or nurse specialist for advice. **If you are taking blood thinning tablets (for example warfarin, clopidogrel, ticagrelor, dabigatran, rivaroxaban or apixaban), please contact the department immediately.** Please take all other medication as you would usually. Please make sure you bring with you a list of all medications you are currently taking.

### Having Sedation

As the test may take several minutes it is usual to give sedation to help you feel more comfortable. Having sedation means that you will be made drowsy while you have the test. Sedation will be given to you through a small tube in a vein in your arm or hand. With this type of sedation, it will be necessary for you to stay in the unit for a while afterwards. It is essential that you arrange for a responsible person to escort you home after the test. Failure to make these arrangements may result in the investigation being cancelled. Because of the lingering effects of the drugs used it is important that, for the next 24 hours, you have someone to stay with you, you do not drive, return to work, operate machinery, sign any legal documents, or drink alcohol.

Please note you will be in the department for approximately four to six hours in total. Your escort may like to ring the department on the telephone number overleaf before coming to collect you. Please ask them to ring two hours after your appointment time so a collection time can be agreed.

### What will happen?

When you arrive the doctor or nurse will explain the procedure and answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign the consent form, giving us your permission to have the procedure performed. You will be taken into the investigation room on a trolley and asked to lay in a comfortable position on your left-hand side.

### Afterwards

We will want you to have a drink before you leave the unit to check that you have no problems with your swallowing. Due to the sedation, you will need to try and rest for a short while before going home. For some time afterwards you may find that you have a sore throat. This is quite normal and may be eased by drinking water. You will need to be on a liquid only diet for 24 hours, then you can advance to a soft diet for the next seven days.

A four-hour period of observation after the procedure is required. Your escort may like to ring the department on the telephone number overleaf before coming to collect you. Please ask them to ring two hours after your appointment time so a collection time can be agreed.

When will I get the results of the procedure? The doctor or nurse will talk to you at the end of the procedure explaining what has been done. The results of any biopsies will take several days to be processed and your GP will receive the results approximately two weeks after your appointment. It may then be necessary for us to arrange an outpatient appointment for you.

### **Are there any risks?**

A gastroscopy with radio frequency ablation is a very safe procedure but rarely bleeding and/or tearing of the gullet lining may occur. This happens in less than one in every 100 procedures, but if it were to happen it may mean you will have to stay in hospital for a few days. A narrowing of the gullet is slightly more common but can be easily managed by stretching the area (dilation), this would be done in the endoscopy department as an outpatient. After the radiofrequency ablation you should let your doctor know immediately if you get chest or tummy pain, difficulty swallowing or breathing, a temperature, bleeding, or vomiting.

### **Are there any alternatives?**

Your doctor has recommended a gastroscopy and radio frequency ablation as the best way to treat your condition, and this should have been discussed with you before offering you the appointment. Surgery may be an option, and this should have been discussed with you.

What happens if I decide not to have a gastroscopy and radio frequency ablation Your doctor may not be able to treat the cause of your problem. If you decide not to have a gastroscopy and radio frequency ablation you should discuss this carefully with your doctor.

### **Who can I contact if I have any questions?**

Please do not hesitate to telephone the department on 01923 436095 for Watford General Hospital (Monday to Friday - 8.00am– 6.00pm).

**After the investigation if you experience severe chest or tummy pain, swelling in the neck or shortness of breath please attend your nearest Accident and Emergency department, do not drive.**

- Accident and Emergency at Watford on 01923 217 256
- Please note: There is NO Accident and Emergency at Hemel Hempstead or St Albans Hospitals.

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01923 217187 or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net)

