

# Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)

*How to prepare and what to expect*

Your ERCP procedure is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY DATE TIME

## How to Prepare

7 Days Before	5 Days Before	On Procedure Day
<p>Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If you take blood-thinning medicines</b> such as Coumadin (warfarin) or Plavix (clopidogrel):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Call the doctor who prescribed these medicines.</li> <li>- Tell the doctor that you are having an ERCP, and the date of your procedure.</li> <li>- Ask for special instructions for your blood-thinning medicines.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Cancellations:</b> If you need to cancel or reschedule your procedure, please call 206._____.</li> <li>• <b>Discharge and transportation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An adult family member or friend <b>must</b> pick you up when you are ready to go home. You cannot drive, take a bus or taxi, or use a service such as Hopelink or Paratransit by yourself after your test.</li> <li>- <b>Your test will be cancelled if you do not have an adult family member or friend to take you home.</b></li> <li>- We strongly advise that a responsible adult stay with you for the rest of the day.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Date:</p> <p><b>If you have diabetes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the provider who manages your diabetes medicines.</li> <li>• Tell the provider that you are having an ERCP, and the date of your procedure.</li> <li>• Ask for special instructions for your diabetes medicines.</li> </ul>	<p>Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do not eat anything after midnight</b> the night before your procedure.</li> <li>• <b>As soon as you get up in the morning</b>, take your morning medicines with water.</li> <li>• <b>Drink only water until 2 hours before your procedure.</b></li> <li>• Leave valuables at home, or keep them safe with your driver or escort</li> </ul> <p><b>What to bring to your appointment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An adult family member or friend</li> <li>• A list of all medicines you currently take</li> <li>• Photo ID, insurance care, and co-pay, if needed</li> <li>• All the medicines you are currently taking, in case you need to stay in the hospital overnight</li> </ul> <p><b>At the hospital:</b></p> <p>You must remove all jewelry and piercings before the procedure. If you can, leave all valuables at home, or give them to your family member or friend for safekeeping.</p>

## Locations and Parking

Maps and parking rates are included with this handout.

### Harborview Medical Center

GI Endoscopy Suite  
Maleng Building, 8th Floor  
410 Ninth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104  
206.744.3519

Parking 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the Ninth and Jefferson Garage (P2) off James and Terry.

### University of Washington Medical Center

Digestive Health Center  
Surgery Pavilion, 3rd Floor  
1959 N.E. Pacific St., Seattle, WA 98195  
206.598.4377

From N.E. Pacific St., follow the signs to the Emergency Room. At the stop sign, enter the Surgery Pavilion Parking Garage on the left. After parking in the garage, take the elevator to the 3rd floor. Turn right into the Digestive Disease Center.

### Northwest Hospital

1550 N. 115th St., Seattle, WA 98133  
**206.368.1770**

The Endoscopy Procedure Suite is on the 1st floor of the main hospital, across from Starbucks.

## What is an ERCP?

ERCP is short for *endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography*. This procedure uses a device called an *endoscope* to look at the *ducts* (tubes) that carry fluids to and from your liver, gallbladder, and pancreas.

An endoscope is a flexible tube about the width of a little finger. It is placed into your mouth and moved down into your *esophagus* (the tube that goes from your throat to your stomach), stomach, and small intestine. The tube will not get in the way of your breathing.

A special dye called *contrast* will be injected into the ducts that are being examined. We will then take X-rays. The contrast helps images show clearly on the X-rays.

ERCP is used to diagnose and treat stones, tumors, leaks from trauma or surgery, or narrowed areas of the bile ducts. If needed, your doctor can also dilate narrow areas (*strictures*), place a *stent* (a small tube), remove a stone, or do other treatments.

## What to Expect

- You will receive general *anesthesia* (sleeping medicine). This will make you sleep during the exam.
- This test will take about 1 to 2 hours, but your appointment will last longer than that, to give you time to prepare for your ERCP and recover afterward.
- Most patients can go home after their ERCP, but some need to stay overnight in the hospital. When you wake up, you will either be discharged or go to a hospital unit to spend the night.

## How do I get the test results?

When you wake up after the procedure, your doctor will talk with you about the results. If your results are not ready right after the ERCP, we will tell you when you can expect to receive them.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Please call if you have questions or concerns. Weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., call the clinic where your ERCP is scheduled. After hours and on weekends and holidays, call the Community Care Line at Harborview, 206.744.2500.