

# 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
Date:	Date:	Date:
<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>Transportation:</b> You must arrange for a responsible adult to take you home after your ERCP.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You cannot drive on the day of your ERCP. You cannot take a taxi or bus unless you have a responsible adult to ride with you.</li> <li>- <b>Your test may be cancelled if you arrive at the hospital without a responsible adult to drive you home.</b></li> <li>- Your driver must be in our waiting room at the time of your discharge, about 2 hours after your appointment time. If you need to stay in the hospital overnight, your driver may go home until the next day.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<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>	<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>• Your driver or escort</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 will need to remove all jewelry and piercings before the procedure. If possible, leave these at home.</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 Health Center.

## 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.

## 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. This tube 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.