

Information about having a
Oesophageal Stent

What is an Oesophageal Stent?

The oesophagus (gullet) is a hollow muscular tube which takes food from the mouth down to the stomach. Any blockage in the oesophagus will cause difficulty with swallowing. Inserting a metal mesh stent (oesophageal stent) will help this.

Who will do it?

A specially trained doctor called a Radiologist.

Where will it be done?

Usually in a screening room in the x-ray department.

When can I discuss the procedure?

You can discuss this with your referring doctor in the ward, and also the Radiologist before the procedure.

Consent

We will ask you to sign a consent form before the procedure. Please make sure that you ask any questions you may have. When signing the form you should know what we plan to do, alternative treatments, and any risks or complication of the procedure.

What preparation is required before the procedure?

You cannot eat for 6 hours before the procedure but you may drink small amounts of clear fluid up to 2 hours before the procedure.

You will need to undress and wear a hospital gown.

What happens during the procedure?

You will need to lie on your back on the x-ray table.

We may give you a sedative or painkillers via a needle in your arm. We will monitor your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, oxygen intake). You may need oxygen.

The radiologist will spray the back of your throat with local anaesthetic and then pass a fine tube through your mouth, down the gullet and through the blockage. The stent is then passed over the fine tube and into the correct position across the blockage. We then remove the fine tube.

You may experience some slight discomfort for a short period of time but the painkillers will help.

How long will it take?

Every patient's situation is different, for a variety of reasons, however you can expect to be in the x-ray department for about one and a half hours.

What happens afterwards?

You will return to your ward and remain on bed rest for a few hours. The nursing staff will monitor you and carry out routine observations (blood pressure, pulse etc).

A few hours after the procedure you will be able to drink clear fluids. The following day you may return to the x-ray department where you will be x-rayed to check the stent is still in the correct position.

The ward staff will give you advice about eating.

Are there any risks?

This is a safe procedure but as with any medical treatment some risks and complications can arise.

There may be some bleeding during the procedure but this generally stops without the need for any action.

There may be mild to moderate chest pain for a couple of days while the stent beds in.

Some patients experience heartburn afterwards and need to take medicine for this.

Very rarely putting a stent in can cause a tear in the oesophagus. This is a serious condition and may need an operation or insertion of another stent.

If you have any questions please telephone the number on your appointment card or letter.