ERCP – Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography

Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (or ERCP) is a procedure where a lighted tube is passed through the upper digestive tract to find the opening of the bile and pancreatic ducts. Once this opening has been located, a small catheter is passed into the opening and dye is injected, and x-rays are taken. ERCP is commonly used to evaluate diseases of the liver, gallbladder and biliary tree, and the pancreas.

Depending on each individual’s problems, the procedure may end after the x-rays are taken, or further treatment may be required, such as making a small cut in the opening with an electric wire, called a sphincterotomy, or placing a tube in the opening of the duct called a stent.

Complications are not common with this procedure, however they do occur. They include inflammation of the pancreas called pancreatitis, infection, bleeding, and perforation of the intestine or bile duct. Complications may also occur related to the sedation used for the procedure.

You will be asked to sign a permit prior to the procedure, and you should be sure to bring someone with you who can drive you home. The medicine used during the procedure may make you drowsy and many people who have the ERCP do not remember having the procedure done.

Prior to the procedure, you should have had nothing to eat or drink for at least six to eight (6-8) hours. Be sure to let the nurses and the doctor know if you have any allergies, as well as any serious health problems you have. You must have a driver with you; if you do not bring someone with you to drive you home, your procedure cannot be done and it will have to be rescheduled.

**NOTE:** Be sure to notify your doctor of any of the following:

- If you take blood thinners;
- If you take aspirin or its derivatives;
- If you are a diabetic;
- If you have heart valve disease or an artificial valve;
- If you have had rheumatic fever;
- If you have had hepatitis or AIDS

If you take insulin or any medications for diabetes, do not take them on the day of the procedure. If you take medication for high blood pressure or any heart medications, take those with a sip (only) of water.

Your appointment is scheduled on __________________________________________________________

Please arrive at __________________________________________________________

You are scheduled at __________________________________________________________