



ERCP

What is an ERCP?

ERCP, Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography, is an endoscopic procedure that enables your physician to examine the bile ducts, pancreatic duct and gallbladder.

Why is an ERCP done?

ERCP can help diagnose the cause of jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of eyes) and pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas often caused by gallstones). ERCP can also be used to evaluate narrowing or blockages in the biliary or pancreatic ducts.

What preparation is done for an ERCP?

For the best and safest examination, the stomach must be completely empty for your ERCP procedure. Ensure that you follow the ERCP preparation instructions given to you by your physician. Please make sure that you bring a current list of your medications with you to your endoscopy appointment.

What can be expected during the ERCP procedure?

The doctor will spray some anesthetic in your throat or give you sedation through an intravenous needle to make you more comfortable. During an ERCP, the physician passes an endoscope (a thin, flexible tube with a camera) through the mouth, esophagus and stomach into the duodenum while you are positioned on an Xray bed.

The image from the camera is displayed on a monitor during the procedure. The physician will pass small instruments through the endoscope into the major duodenal papilla (ducts from the liver and pancreas) and with the help of the endoscope, the doctor will pass a plastic tube called a catheter through and inject contrast material (dye) into the ducts while taking X-rays to help visualize any abnormalities.

Often times, stones can be removed and blockages opened. Your doctor might remove small tissue samples, called biopsies and these samples are usually available in 10-14 days and the results will be sent to your family physician.