

## Endoscopy

# Cholangioscopy

You should read this information with the leaflet Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio-pancreatography (ERCP): The procedure explained.

### What is a cholangioscopy?

Cholangioscopy is a procedure to examine the bile duct. It is an add-on test to ERCP and is done using a cholangioscope. This is a mini scope that can be passed through an ERCP endoscope channel.

### What are the benefits?

#### 1. Biopsies of a stricture (narrowing) within the bile duct

Benign scar tissue or a tumour can cause stricture in the bile duct. The cholangioscope can be put into the bile duct to see the stricture area. The cholangioscope has a mini-channel through which a mini-biopsy forceps can be introduced. This enables targeted biopsies of the stricture, which allows accurate diagnosis of the cause of the stricture.

#### 2. Treatment of large bile duct stones

The ERCP endoscopy procedure is usually performed to remove gallstones in the bile duct. Large stones are harder to remove because of narrowing at the lower end of the bile duct. The cholangioscope can be advanced into the bile duct.



## Patient Information

A probe is passed down the mini-channel to perform lithotripsy, breaking the large stones into smaller fragments. This process is called electrohydraulic lithotripsy (EHL). The smaller stone fragments can then be removed with conventional ERCP methods. The UHCW specialist pancreatico-biliary team offers EHL as a treatment option for difficult to treat bile duct stones. Some EHL procedures may require general anaesthetic. Follow-up procedures or clinic appointments will be arranged.

### **Are there any significant risks?**

The cholangioscopy procedure involves risks like those of ERCP like bleeding, pancreatitis, and cholangitis (infection of the bile duct).

To reduce the risk of pancreatitis, you will be given Indomethacin (or another anti-inflammatory medication) in a rectal suppository unless there is any reason not to, and intravenous fluid at the end of the procedure.

To reduce the risk of cholangitis, you will be given an injection dose of antibiotics, and a course of oral antibiotics to take home.

### **Are there other differences to the ERCP procedure?**

The ERCP procedure will take longer due to the addition of cholangioscopy. Top up or higher doses of sedative and analgesia medications are given.

### **Further information**

National Institute for Health and Care (NICE) has published an Interventional procedure guidance on EHL in May 2021. Please refer to the information sheet "NICE Information for the public" for further guidance.

If you have any other questions, please contact the Endoscopy Unit on 024 7696 6805 or 024 7696 6806.

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# Patient Information

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