



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

24 Hour Oesophageal pH Monitoring

Issued by Oesophageal Physiology Unit

This leaflet is intended to answer some of the questions you may have about your forthcoming 24 hour Oesophageal pH Monitoring test. Please do not hesitate to contact the number on your appointment letter if there is anything further you would like to know.

Why do I need the test?

The test measures the amount of acid that flows back (refluxes) from your stomach in to your gullet (oesophagus) and will help to determine if your symptoms are caused by acid reflux.

Risks, Benefits and Alternatives

There are some slight risks associated with the test. You may experience a sore throat or irritation to the back of your nose while the probe is in position and you will be aware of it while eating. This should not cause a problem with eating your normal food. In most cases, the tests provide an accurate assessment of your symptoms. This is helpful in providing a diagnosis and in managing your condition. An alternative to this test would be a Barium Meal. However this does not provide such accurate information and in some cases does not allow us to make an accurate diagnosis.

What should I do before the test?

You should stop taking tablets which reduce acid production (Lansoprazole, Omeprazole, Pantoprazole, etc.) seven days before the test so that we can obtain an accurate assessment of the amount of acid that is refluxing into your gullet. You should continue taking medication for other conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, high blood pressure etc. as normal. **You should not eat anything for six hours before the test but you may drink clear fluids (water, juice, tea and coffee without milk) until two hours before the test.**

Do not wear make-up on the day of the test as this makes securing the tape difficult. If the tape is not secure it may result in the tube moving slightly which will make the test less accurate.

On arrival at the hospital

The Doctor/Nurse Specialist carrying out the test will explain the procedure to you and ask you to sign a consent form. This is to confirm that you understand the test and its implications.

During the test

You will be made comfortable on a couch, sitting upright. The Specialist Nurse/Doctor will then pass a fine tube (probe) over the back of your nose and back of your throat in to your oesophagus. You will not be given any sedation or local anaesthetic for the test and should only experience slight discomfort while the probe is being inserted.

The probe will remain in place for the duration of the test (24 hours) and is attached to a recording machine, not much larger than a walkman, which is worn around the waist. You will be asked to complete a diary sheet during the test.

How do I complete the diary sheet?

This will be explained to you by the Specialist Nurse/Doctor carrying out the procedure. You will be asked to record when you lie down, eat food and experience the symptoms that cause you problems, e.g. heartburn, regurgitation, pain, etc.

You will also be asked to record your symptoms by pressing a button on your recorder every time you become aware of them (this inserts an electronic mark on to the recording).

Will I be able to feel the probe?

You will always be aware of the probe in the back of your throat throughout the test but most people find they become less aware of it with time.

Will I be able to eat and drink as normal?

You should continue with your normal diet throughout the test as it is important to record what happens during a normal day. The catheter may move very slightly as you eat, which may cause a strange feeling in your throat but this should settle when you stop eating. **Please do not chew gum.**

Will I be able to sleep?

When you go to bed, you should unclip the waist belt and place the holder and recorder (still attached to the probe) on your bedside or under your pillow. It is important that you sleep in your normal position and record any symptoms that disturb you during the night.

What happens if I need to cough, vomit or blow my nose?

The probe will be securely taped to your nose, cheek and neck and is not likely to move during coughing, vomiting or blowing your nose. Very rarely, the probe can be vomited back up into the mouth and if this happens it must be removed. To do this, unclip the probe from the recorder, remove the securing tapes, take a deep breath and pull the probe out from your nose. The probe can be disposed of with your household waste but all other equipment should be returned as arranged.

May I take any medicine for indigestion during the test?

Please do not take any indigestion medication during the test as most of these medications reduce or mask the amount of acid present in the oesophagus and will alter the result of the test.

Will I be able to go to work?

If possible, please follow your normal daily routine. However, if you feel it inappropriate to remain at work try to be as active as you would normally be while at home.

Will I be able to take a bath or shower?

The recorder and securing tapes should not get wet. Please bathe with care.

Can I damage the equipment?

Please treat the equipment with care and do not allow the recorder to come into contact with water.

What should I do if I cannot tolerate the presence of the probe?

In this unlikely event you can remove the catheter yourself. To do this, remove the securing tapes, take a deep breath and pull the probe out from your nose. The probe can be disposed of with your household waste but all other equipment should be returned as arranged. If the probe is removed earlier than planned we will gain less information about your condition.

What can I expect when I return to have the probe removed?

This appointment only takes approximately 5-10 minutes. Removing the catheter takes only 2-3 seconds and should not be uncomfortable.

Glossary of terms

Oesophagus

The oesophagus, or gullet, is a muscular tube which extend from the throat to the stomach.

pH

A scale of numbers between 0 and 14 that shows the strength of acid or alkali. Acidic solutions have a pH of less than 7; alkaline solutions have a pH of greater than 7.

24 hour Oesophageal pH Monitoring Test

This is a test carried out over 24 hours during which the acidity or alkalinity (the pH) within the oesophagus is measured and recorded.

Reflux

The flow of stomach contents back up into the oesophagus.

Useful contact numbers

North Tyneside General Hospital

Rake Lane
North Shields
NE29 8NH
0191 349 9670

Wansbeck General Hospital

Woodhorn Lane
Ashington
NE63 9JJ
01670 529 902

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

PIN 243/V4

Review date: September 2021

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