

Oxford Upper Gastrointestinal Centre

Staging of cancers of the oesophagus and stomach

Information for patients



Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about planned staging investigations for cancer of the oesophagus or the stomach. We will tell you about the exact type of investigations you may need. You may not need all the investigations listed below.

Staging investigations will determine how advanced the cancer is, whether the cancer is just in the area of the oesophagus or stomach or whether it has spread elsewhere in your body.

The treatment you will be offered will depend on the stage of the cancer, its position and its size, as well as your general health and fitness.

CT scan (Computerised Tomography scan)

A CT scan involves taking X-ray pictures of your chest, abdomen and pelvis. The scan is performed whilst you are an outpatient (not admitted to hospital) and no sedation is required. The pictures are fed into a computer which produces X-ray pictures at different levels of your chest, abdomen and pelvis.

You will be contacted directly about your appointment and will be given information about how to prepare for the scan. The scan usually takes about 30-45 minutes.

The CT scan is painless and involves lying very still on a special couch within the CT scanner. The scanner is an open, ring-shaped machine. The couch will move slowly in and out of the scanner whilst the images are being taken.

Before and during the scan you will be asked to swallow a special liquid which lines the oesophagus and the stomach. This liquid helps to show up your organs on the scans.

It takes several days for the results of the scan to be available. When they come through they will be discussed with you at an outpatient appointment.

You will be given an information leaflet to give you further details about CT scans.

PET/CT scan (Positron Emission Tomography)

A PET/CT scan is a special radioactive X-ray scan which uses small amounts of a radioactive sugar to produce high quality images of your body. The PET scan will produce images that show how your body is working. At the same time, another CT scan uses X-rays to show the density (thickness) of different organs in your body. PET scan images can provide additional information which can help the doctors plan your treatment. PET scans are performed as an outpatient procedure.

You will be given a separate information leaflet to tell you more about this scan.

Endoscopic Ultrasound Scan (EUS)

The Endoscopic Ultrasound Scan involves having an endoscopy under sedation (when you are made to feel sleepy). A narrow tube (endoscope) with a tiny ultrasound probe at the end is passed into the tube to your stomach (oesophagus). It allows the doctor to have a clear view of the cancer itself and to see how far it has grown into the wall of the oesophagus. The doctor can also see whether it is affecting surrounding structures, such as lymph nodes, major blood vessels, the heart, lungs and diaphragm.

You will be given a further leaflet about this scan.

Staging laparoscopy

A staging laparoscopy is performed under a general anaesthetic (when you are fully asleep). It is usually carried out as a day case procedure, which means you should not need to stay in hospital overnight. However, you may need to stay overnight in hospital if you feel unwell or have had a further treatment.

A laparoscopy involves passing a special tube called a laparoscope through three small cuts in your abdomen. The surgeon will be able to look at the cancer and see if it has spread within your abdomen. This test can pick up any spread of cancer which may not be visible on a CT or PET scan. An endoscopy will be performed at the same time, if this was not previously carried out in Oxford.

We will normally give you the results of this investigation straight after the laparoscopy when you are on the ward.

Planning treatment

Once all the tests have been performed and the results are available, your case will be discussed at a weekly multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting. This meeting is attended by specialist surgeons; oncology doctors (who prescribe radiotherapy and chemotherapy); radiologists (X-ray doctors); pathologists (doctors who examine body tissue specimens); nurse practitioners and the MDT co-ordinator.

After this meeting, we will discuss a plan of treatment with you, either in clinic, on the ward, or directly by telephone.

Further information / how to contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Advanced Nurse Practitioners on:

Tel: **01865 235 706**

If you are unable to speak with us please leave a message on the answerphone and we will call you back as soon as possible.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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