

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 normally would at home.

Will I be able to bathe or shower?

The recorder must not get wet so **you must not take a bath, shower or go swimming.**

Damage to the equipment

Please treat the equipment with care. The catheter is particularly vulnerable and if it catches on a door handle for example, it will cause irreversibly damaged. We recommend that you wear a loose top over the recorder and catheter to protect it from snagging.

What if I can't tolerate the catheter?

In this unlikely event, you can remove the catheter yourself. To do this, remove the tape from your face, take a deep breath in and pull it out from your nose. Please dispose of the catheter and return the recorder and diary to the unit. Obviously, if this happens we will gain less information about your condition.

What happens at the end of the test?

At the end of the test, the catheter needs to be removed. This is a very simple procedure and the practitioners will teach you how to do it. The recorder and diary need to be returned promptly, either by hand or by special delivery guaranteed post.

When will I know the result?

The results are sent back to the doctor or consultant who referred you for the tests. You should allow two weeks for the results to reach them.

Glossary of terms

- **Oesophagus:** The oesophagus or gullet is a muscular tube, about 24cm long, which extends from the throat to the stomach.
- **pH:** A scale of numbers between 1 and 14 that show the strength of acid or alkali.
- **24 hour oesophageal pH test:** A 24 hour test during which acidity and alkalinity (the pH) of the oesophagus is measured / recorded.
- **Catheter:** Flexible plastic tube.
- **Reflux:** Flow of stomach contents into the oesophagus.
- **Acid measuring catheter:** Catheter with a pH sensor attached to its tip to measure acidity and alkalinity.

Contacting us

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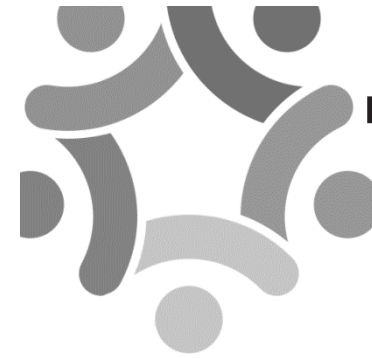
To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT GI Physiology Department

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NHS

Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

24-hour oesophageal pH testing

Information for patients

GI Physiology Practitioners
0118 322 7725

This leaflet explains what happens during a 24-hour oesophageal pH test and how to prepare for it.

Why do I need the test?

It will be the amount of acid that wells up (refluxes) from your stomach into your oesophagus (gullet) and will help find out if your symptoms are caused by acid reflux.

What to expect before the test

- You should **stop taking indigestion medication one week before the test** so that we can obtain an accurate assessment of the amount of acid that is refluxing. Full instructions will be in your appointment letter, as this can vary depending on which drugs you are taking.
- Continue taking medication for other conditions, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, as normal.
- **You should not eat or drink anything in the four hours before the test, apart from sips of water.**
- You are advised to wear a separate top and a skirt or trousers as the catheter is inserted under your top and attached to the machine, which is worn on a belt over your neck. Please do not wear dresses.
- **Do not apply moisturiser or make up to your face / neck on the day of the appointment.**

What to expect on arrival

The GI Physiology practitioner will explain the procedure to you and ask you to sign a consent form. This is to ensure that you understand the test and its implications.

The practitioner will also ask you a series of questions about your symptoms and the medication taken for them. This will help with the interpretation of the results. **Please bring a list of your medications with you.**

What to expect during the test:

You will be made comfortable on the couch, sitting upright. The practitioner will then pass a very fine acid-measuring catheter (flexible tube) through your nose and into your oesophagus. You will **not** be asleep or sedated as the procedure should not be painful and you will only feel a slight discomfort. The catheter will remain in place for the duration of the test (about 24 hours). This is attached to a recording machine, worn around your neck. We will ask you to complete a diary during the test period.

How do I complete the diary sheet?

The practitioner will explain this to you during your visit. Most importantly, we want you to record when you experience your symptoms, e.g. heartburn, regurgitation etc.

Will I be able to feel the catheter?

You will be aware of the catheter in the back of your throat throughout the test but most patients become less aware of it with time.

Will I be able to eat and drink?

We especially want you to continue with your normal diet throughout the test, as we need to see what happens during a normal day.

Please do not chew gum. The catheter may move very slightly as you eat and it may feel strange but we would like you to persevere as it is important to know what happens after mealtimes.

Will I be able to sleep?

On going to bed, it is preferable to keep the recorder around your neck but if you prefer you may undo the waist belt and put the recorder (still attached) on your bed or bedside table. Again, it is important that you sleep in your normal position and record any symptoms that disturb you during the night.

Can I drive wearing it?

The medical advice is that you should not drive during the test, as you may be distracted. **If you are coming by car to the hospital, please make sure you are accompanied by a driver.**

What about indigestion medicine?

Please **do not take any indigestion medication during the test** as all medications for indigestion have the effect of reducing or masking the amount of acid present and therefore will not give an accurate result.