

Ercp

What Is Ercp?

Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) is a specialised procedure that combines endoscopy and X-ray imaging to examine and treat conditions affecting the bile ducts, pancreatic ducts, and gallbladder. It is commonly used to diagnose and manage issues such as gallstones, biliary strictures, and pancreatic inflammation or tumours.

How Is Ercp Performed?

During ERCP:

- A flexible endoscope is passed through your mouth, oesophagus, stomach, and into the duodenum (the first part of the small intestine).
- A camera on the endoscope provides real-time images of your digestive tract.
- A contrast dye is injected into the bile and pancreatic ducts, which makes them visible on X-rays.
- If needed, therapeutic procedures such as removing gallstones, placing stents, or taking tissue samples (biopsies) can be performed at the same time.

Why Is Ercp Performed?

ERCP is used to diagnose and treat conditions such as:

- **Gallstones** blocking the bile ducts
- **Biliary strictures** (narrowing of the bile ducts)
- **Pancreatitis** (inflammation of the pancreas)
- **Cholangitis** (infection of the bile ducts)
- **Tumours** or other obstructions affecting bile or pancreatic flow

What To Expect During Ercp

- **Preparation:** You will need to fast for 6-8 hours before the procedure. Your doctor will provide specific instructions regarding medications, particularly if you take blood thinners. Be sure to inform your doctor of any allergies, especially to contrast dye or anaesthesia.
- **Sedation or Anaesthesia:** The procedure is typically performed under conscious sedation or general anaesthesia to ensure your comfort.
- **Procedure Duration:** ERCP generally takes 30-60 minutes, depending on whether additional

treatments are required.

- **Recovery:** You will be monitored for a short time after the procedure to check for any immediate complications.

Benefits Of Ercp

ERCP is a minimally invasive procedure that not only diagnoses conditions but also treats them during the same session. This dual purpose reduces the need for multiple procedures and can provide faster symptom relief.

Risks And Complications

While ERCP is generally safe, there are some risks, including:

- **Pancreatitis** (inflammation of the pancreas)
 - **Infection** or bleeding
 - **Perforation** (a small tear in the digestive tract)
 - **Allergic reactions** to the contrast dye
- Your consultant will explain these risks and take steps to minimise them.

Why Choose Birmingham Liver Clinic?

At Birmingham Liver Clinic, we offer advanced diagnostic and therapeutic procedures like ERCP in a safe, patient-centred environment. Our experienced team of gastroenterologists and hepatologists use state-of-the-art equipment to provide personalised care for your needs.

Contact Us

If you have been advised to undergo ERCP or have concerns about your liver, bile ducts, or pancreas, contact Birmingham Liver Clinic today. Early diagnosis and treatment can make a significant difference.