

SAMPLE



**Blackpool Teaching
Hospitals**

NHS Foundation Trust

Oesophageal Varices

**Gastroenterology Unit
Patient Information Leaflet**



SAMPLE

What are oesophageal varices?

Oesophageal varices are veins at the lower end of the gullet and upper part of the stomach. These are caused by backpressure when blood flow through the liver is restricted or blocked usually because of cirrhosis.

Severe bleeding can occur; banding or injection can sometimes prevent this. Drug treatment is also sometimes advised. Normally 4 to 6 endoscopies are required to treat the varices every 1 to 2 weeks until they are destroyed.

What is the treatment?

Oesophageal varices can be treated by banding or by injection during a gastroscopy.

Banding: small rubber bands are applied around each varix. This stops the blood supply to the veins and they eventually disappear. These bands will then drop off and pass through the digestive system naturally.

Injection: an injection can be given into the veins in the oesophagus. This causes clotting in the veins and helps to stop them bleeding. Eventually they will disappear.

You will be asked not to eat or drink anything for 6 hours before your procedure. The procedure will be fully explained to you beforehand. You will be given a sedative so you will need to arrange for someone to take you home.

What are the side effects?

Banding or injection may be followed by some pain in the chest and neck lasting for a few hours. It may feel difficult to swallow for a day or two afterwards and during this time it is advisable to take a soft diet.

Rarely, after injection treatment to the oesophagus, it can become ulcerated or scarred causing a stricture (narrowing) in the oesophagus. If this occurs, then a dilatation may be necessary in about 1 in 100 patients. Banding or injection will be repeated until the gastroscopy confirms that the veins have gone.

There is a risk of bleeding following your procedure therefore if you vomit any blood or notice your stools have turned black and tarry, this might mean that your varices have bled. In this case you must seek medical advice.

If you have any problems following your endoscopy please phone the Gastro Unit on 01253 953043 between 7.45am and 6.00pm or phone Ward 12 on 01253 953412.

Useful contact details

Gastroenterology Unit

Between 7.45am and 6pm

Telephone: **01253 953043**

Out of Hours

Please telephone Ward 12

Telephone: **01253 953412**

Hospital Switchboard: **01253 300000**

Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offer impartial advice and deal with any concerns or complaints the Trust receives. You can contact them via tel: **01253 955588** or by email: **bfwh.patientrelations@nhs.net**

You can also write to us at: **Patient Relations Department, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool FY3 8NR**

Further information is available on our website: **www.bfwh.nhs.uk**

References

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: **Procedural Document and Leaflet Coordinator 01253 953397** or **bfwh.trustpolicyteam@nhs.net**

Options available

If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this leaflet then please call: **01253 955520**



Our Four Values:

