

General guidelines for your Peroral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM)

Why it is performed:

Our doctors perform POEM to treat the following:

- **Achalasia (E-POEM)** – this occurs when patients have difficulty swallowing. This may be caused by the esophagus contracting or tightening abnormally, making it difficult for the patient to swallow food. The esophagus is a long muscular tube that connects the mouth to the stomach.
- **Gastroparesis (G-POEM)** – this occurs when the muscles of the stomach have difficulty contracting, making it difficult for food to leave the stomach and enter the small intestine. This leads to abdominal pain, bloating, nausea, and vomiting.
- **Zenker Diverticulum (Z-POEM)** – a condition that affects the patient’s esophagus, leading to difficulty eating and lung infections. It is a small pouch just outside of the esophagus that will block food from going down into the stomach, and causes food to collect in the pouch.

Before the Procedure:

- The hospital will call you a few days before your procedure to tell you what time to arrive. If you need information before receiving this call you call the hospital PAT department at **732-828-3000 extension 36616**. If you need to confirm your arrival time after you have received this call you can call the endoscopy schedulers at **732-253-3210**.
- Arrival times are given to admit you to the unit and prepare you for your procedure. It is important that you arrive at your given time. ***Please Note: Unlike surgery centers this unit treats both inpatients and outpatients and emergencies may arise that may cause delays in scheduled procedure. Please be patient and know that we will provide you with the best care when you go into your procedure. Due to the unpredictable nature of procedure units, please be prepared to spend the day here.***
- Some procedures or recoveries require a hospitalization that we may not always be able to predict, please be prepared to stay in the hospital if necessary.
- Do not bring any valuables or wear any jewelry the day of your procedure as we do not have space for you to secure belongings.
- Because you will be sedated for the procedure you will need to bring someone with you to take you home. You cannot drive or take public transportation alone for 24 hours after the procedure. We have limited space in the waiting area and only allow one visitor to wait during your procedure.

- If you need to send proof of your COVID vaccine please email it to VaccineStatus@rwjbh.org

Medications

- If you are taking medications for high blood pressure, seizures, or if you are taking prednisone, you may take these medications the morning of the procedure or at least 2 hours before the procedure with a small sip of water.
- For patients with Diabetes:
 - If you take a “sugar” pill, **do not** take it on the day of your procedure.
 - If you are taking regular insulin (R), **do not** take it on the day of your procedure.
 - If you are taking any other insulin preparation, please contact your prescribing doctor for instructions.
- If you are taking Warfarin (Coumadin), Clopidogrel (Plavix), or other blood thinners contact your prescribing physician for instructions on when to stop taking this medication.
- If you are taking aspirin daily continue to take this medication.
- Tell your doctor if you have allergies

Prep/Diet

- You can only have a clear liquid diet for two days before the procedure.
- Do not eat or drink for 8 hours before your procedure. This ensures that your esophagus is clear of food products.

The following foods are allowed on a clear liquid diet:

- Water (plain, carbonated, or flavored)
- Fruit juices without pulp, such as apple or white grape juice
- Fruit flavored beverages, such as fruit punch or lemonade
- Carbonated drinks, including dark sodas (cola and root beer)
- Gelatin
- Tea or coffee without milk or cream
- Strained tomato or vegetable juice
- Sports drinks
- Clear, fat-free broth (bouillon or consommé)
- Honey or sugar
- Hard candy, such as lemon drops or peppermint rounds
- Popsicles without milk, bits of fruit, seeds or nuts

Day of Procedure

Your procedure will be done at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in the endoscopy suite on the second floor above Walgreens. The address is:

1 Robert Wood Johnson Place
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Arrive 1 ½ hours before your scheduled procedure time. When you arrive, you will register and give your medical history. You will need a responsible adult with you who will accompany you home. Bring with you a photo ID, insurance card, a list of medications that you take, and a copy of your COVID vaccine card or a negative PCR COVID test result.

PARKING

- Park in the hospital parking lot located on Little Albany Street and take the elevator to the 1st floor. Bring your parking ticket with you when you enter the hospital. Upon arrival stop at the information desk on the 1st floor to check in and have your parking validated. Turn left as you exit the elevator on the 1st floor and take the North building elevators located in the main lobby to the 2nd floor. When you get out of the elevators make a right and another quick right. At the end of that hallway make a left, pass the Cardiac Cath lab and a set of elevators on your right. You will then see the Endoscopy department on your left-hand side above Walgreens and Starbucks.

During POEM:

- We will put an intravenous (IV) catheter in your vein to give you fluids and anesthesia and other needed medications.
- You will be asleep for this procedure.
- Your doctor will pass the camera through your mouth and into the esophagus where the therapy will be applied.
- Your doctor will look at the pictures on a nearby monitor.
- An initial incision will be made in the internal lining of the esophagus. This allows the camera to enter the walls of the esophagus, where the muscle will be opened.
- There will not be any incisions or cuts outside your gastrointestinal tract.

- At the end of the procedure, the incision in the esophagus will be closed with clips.

After the Procedure:

Once the procedure is finished you will recover from anesthesia in the endoscopy unit. Your doctor will discuss the procedure with you. *Please be advised, it is common after receiving anesthesia to forget some of the conversation you had with your doctor. For this reason, we suggest a family member be available for this conversation at your request.*

There is a possibility you will be admitted to the hospital for overnight monitoring and antibiotics.

You will not be allowed to eat the night of the procedure.

Following the procedure, you will not be allowed to eat or drink anything until the following morning after X-ray. If you had an esophageal POEM (EPOEM) or a zenkers POEM (ZPOEM) you will receive an X-ray called a barium swallow or esophagram. If you had a gastric POEM (GPOEM), you will receive an X-ray called an upper GI series. You will be allowed to drink liquids after these tests with your doctor's approval.

Diet After POEM

- You will **not** eat or drink for the first 24hrs.
- On day 2, you will advance to **a clear liquid diet for 3 days.**
 - *The following foods are allowed on a clear liquid diet:*
 - Water (plain, carbonated, or flavored)
 - Fruit juices without pulp, such as apple or white grape juice
 - Fruit flavored beverages, such as fruit punch or lemonade
 - Carbonated drinks, including dark sodas (cola and root beer)
 - Gelatin
 - Tea or coffee without milk or cream
 - Strained tomato or vegetable juice
 - Sports drinks
 - Clear, fat-free broth (bouillon or consommé)
 - Honey or sugar
 - Hard candy, such as lemon drops or peppermint rounds
 - Popsicles without milk, bits of fruit, seeds or nuts

- On day 4, you will then follow a full liquid diet for the **next 3 days**.
 - *The following foods are allowed in **a full liquid diet**:*
 - Blended soups
 - Skim milk
 - Protein shakes
 - Low – fat yogurt
- Then you will advance to a soft diet **on day 8 and continue for 2-3 weeks**.
 - *The following foods are allowed on **a soft diet**:*
 - Full liquid diet foods
 - Pureed meats
 - Scrambled eggs
 - Cottage cheese
 - Fruits
 - Vegetables
 - Oatmeal

After 2-3 weeks of a soft diet, you may advance to a regular diet.

It is recommended to chew foods well, take small bites and avoid foods that may be hard to swallow such as tough meats and bread.

Common Side Effects:

- Chest pain
- Reflux
- Gas

Please Note: *These symptoms should improve with each day. Should any of these symptoms be more severe in nature or longer in duration than your doctor has described, please contact your doctor.*

Call your doctor or 911 right away for:

- Severe or new onset abdominal pain that does not improve by passing gas
- Rectal bleeding that turns the entire toilet bowl red
- Fever greater than 101.5 or chills
- Vomiting blood, black or coffee ground looking material
- Severe dizziness, fainting or chest pain

Medications After discharge:

Your doctor may prescribe the following medications to you after your procedure for you to take at home:

- Antacids twice a day
- Antibiotics for 5 days
- Liquid Tylenol (acetaminophen)
- Antiemetics

If you are experiencing gas or gas pains after the procedure, you may try over the counter (OTC) GasX for symptom relief.

You can continue your daily medications once cleared by your doctor. If you are taking any medications that thin your blood talk with your doctor when to continue these medications.

Commonly prescribed blood thinners:

- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto)
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa)
- Apixaban (Eliquis)
- Heparin
- Warfarin (Coumadin)
- Clopidogrel (Plavix)
- Aspirin
- Enoxaparin (Lovenox)
- Ticagrelor (Brilinta)

Follow up:

Your initial follow up with your surgeon is 7 days after you have the procedure done. Your second follow up is one month after your procedure or sooner if advised by your doctor. At this follow up, your doctor will talk over any symptoms and recommendations for next steps, such as repeating the esophagram/barium swallow or upper GI series (X-ray) and/or repeat endoscopies for monitoring.

Contact your doctor to schedule a follow up appointment:

Clinical Academic Building (CAB)

125 Paterson Street

Suite 5100B

New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Phone: 732-235-7784

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Rutgers GI Clinic: 732-235-7784

Robert Wood Johnson Schedulers: 732-828-3000 x33210

GI clinic Schedulers: 732-235-5973

Interventional GI clinic Schedulers: 732-235-8970

Hospital PAT department **732-828-3000** x36616

For after hour **emergencies** call 732-235-778

One Robert Wood Johnson Place

New Brunswick, NJ 08903
732.828.3000

rwjbh.org/newbrunswick