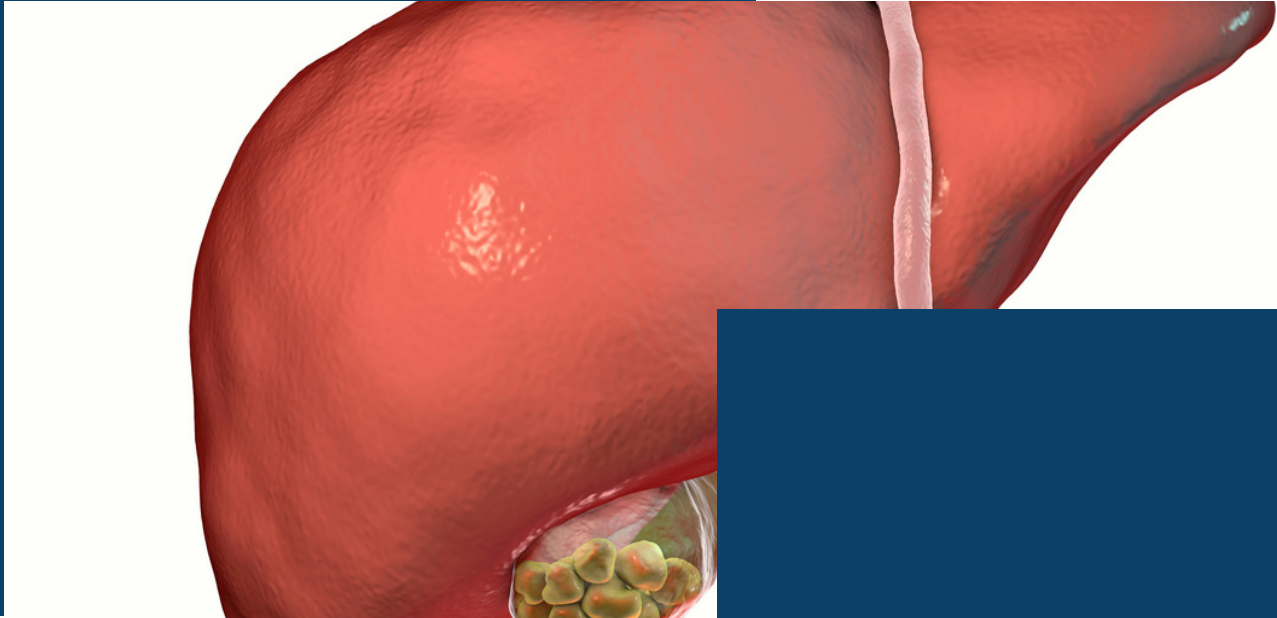


GENERAL SURGERY

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General Surgery News

I pick a topic each month and discuss it in detail on my social media accounts.

When is a cholangiopancreatography necessary?

Welcome to the March newsletter, as a general surgeon, I am committed to empowering patients with knowledge to navigate their healthcare journeys confidently. This month, we are focusing on the reasons someone might require a cholangiopancreatography.

The bile ducts and pancreas play an essential role in digestion, helping to break down fats and process nutrients. However, when problems arise such as blockages, gallstones, inflammation or tumours it is crucial to get an accurate diagnosis. One of the most effective tools for this is a cholangiopancreatography, a specialised imaging technique used to evaluate the biliary and pancreatic system.



Dr. Tendani Muthambi
Specialist General Surgeon

01/02



What to Expect During an ERCP Procedure?

- **Preparation:** Patients must fast for at least 6-8 hours before the procedure. Your doctor may also adjust your medications.
- **Procedure:** You will be given anaesthesia to keep you comfortable. The endoscope is inserted through the mouth, down the esophagus and into the small intestine. A contrast dye is injected to enhance imaging.
- **Recovery:** After the procedure, you may experience a sore throat, mild bloating or nausea, but these symptoms typically resolve quickly.

Most patients can return home the same day but should avoid driving for 24 hours.

What is Cholangiopancreatography?

A cholangiopancreatography is an imaging method used by surgeons and gastroenterologists to assess the bile ducts, gallbladder and pancreatic ducts.

Types of Cholangiopancreatography

Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP):

A minimally invasive procedure that combines endoscopy and X-ray imaging to diagnose and sometimes treat conditions in the bile and pancreatic ducts.

Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography (MRCP):

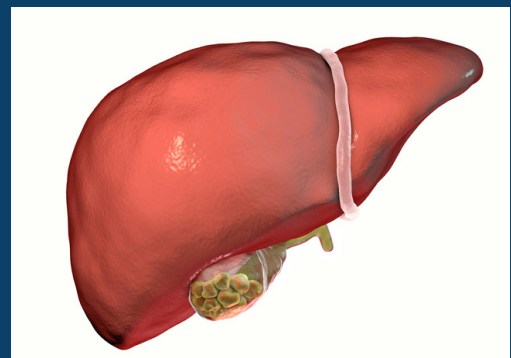
A non-invasive alternative that uses MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) to produce detailed images of the bile and pancreatic ducts without the need for an endoscope or contrast dye injection.

Who Needs a Cholangiopancreatography?

Doctors may recommend ERCP or MRCP if you experience symptoms such as:

- Persistent upper abdominal pain
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Unexplained nausea or vomiting
- Unintended weight loss
- Dark urine and pale stools
- Suspected gallstones, strictures

ERCP vs. MRCP: Which One is Right for You?



ERCP is both diagnostic and therapeutic, meaning that if a problem like a gallstone or bile duct narrowing is found, it can be treated immediately during the same procedure.

MRCP is strictly diagnostic, it provides detailed imaging but cannot be used for treatment. If abnormalities are found, additional procedures may be required.

The role of ERCP in treatment unlike MRCP, ERCP is not just a diagnostic tool, it is used to perform treatments such as:

- Removing bile duct stones
- Placing stents to open narrowed ducts
- Draining fluid buildup from the pancreas or gallbladder
- Taking tissue biopsies to check for cancer