

# Bowel Obstruction

## Colorectal/Stoma Care Patient Information Leaflet

Dear .....

Your doctor has examined you/reviewed tests you may have had done, and feels that you are at risk of obstruction.

### What is bowel obstruction?

Bowel obstruction is a condition in which the bowels cannot work properly due to a narrowing of the bowel. The narrowing may be due to a cancerous tumour or inflammation of the bowel. If your bowel (tube) becomes blocked, food content will not be able to pass through the bowel and may cause symptoms.

## Symptoms of bowel obstruction

- Cramping tummy pain/discomfort that comes and goes in waves (colic).
- Feeling sick and sometimes vomiting.
- Feeling bloated or a feeling of fullness.
- Heartburn (acid reflux).
- Constipation (not passing wind or a bowel motion).
- Noisy gurgling from the abdomen.

**If you have any of the above symptoms, please ring the Surgical Assessment Unit at Russells Hall Hospital urgently on 01384 244359 and inform the staff of your symptoms and that you are an obstruction pathway patient.**

## Risks involved with bowel obstruction

**Perforation** – disease has caused a hole in the bowel, which leads to the bowel's contents leaking into the abdomen.

**Aspiration** – the inhalation of stomach contents into the lungs.

**Dehydration** – lack of fluids in the body.

## Treatments of bowel obstruction

### Operation

In some cases, an operation can be performed to unblock the bowel. This may involve bowel resection, adhesiolysis (release of adhesions), bypass procedure and/or stoma formation. Surgeons may remove the affected part of the bowel and suture (join) the two ends together. If it is not possible to connect the two ends together, they will bring out the end of the bowel through an incision in the abdomen and a stoma bag will collect your stool.

### Stents

Self-expanding metal stents (SEMS) are metallic tubes (or stents) used to hold open the bowel if it is obstructed by a tumour so that stools can pass through.

They can provide rapid relief of distressing symptoms in patients not considered fit for surgery, or for those who have symptoms of bowel obstruction which need to be treated urgently.

### **Supportive care**

In some cases, patients are not suitable for treatment, and the focus would be on managing the symptoms of the bowel obstruction.

## **What if I have any more questions?**

If you have any questions, please contact the colorectal nursing service team on 01384 244286.

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

The colorectal nursing service team: 01384 244286

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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