

What is a HALO Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA)?

HALO radiofrequency ablation is a minimally invasive endoscopic procedure that is designed to treat patients with Barrett's oesophagus and dysplasia (pre-cancerous cells). Barrett's oesophagus is a change in the type of cells that line the oesophagus (gullet) due to chronic acid reflux. If one develops Barrett's oesophagus there is a small chance of developing oesophageal cancer. This risk increases if dysplasia is found in the biopsies taken from the Barrett's oesophagus during endoscopy.

Background

The HALO procedure is recommended by the Australian Gastroenterological Society guidelines and all major Gastroenterology Society guidelines worldwide. This is because of its high success rate (more than 90%) in removing the dysplasia and allowing regrowth of healthy lining of the oesophagus. To date, several research studies have confirmed the treatment success.

The HALO RFA procedure is performed as a day case procedure under deep intravenous sedation or general anaesthesia provided by an anaesthetist. You will be required to fast. Please see the fasting instructions located at the end of this information sheet

Procedure details

The procedure involves a gastroscopy initially to assess and make measurements of the Barrett's oesophagus. Following this a catheter will be inserted into the oesophagus under endoscopy guidance. This catheter will then be connected to the HALO RFA generator and the Barrett's oesophagus will be ablated with radiofrequency current which essentially delivers heat energy to destroy the abnormal cells. There are two types of catheters:

- HALO 360 catheter (4cm) which ablates circumferentially. This is used as the initial ablation for long segment Barrett's oesophagus.
- HALO 90 catheter (2cm) which is a focal ablation catheter that is used to treat short segments and islands of Barrett's oesophagus.

Your doctor will discuss with you which catheter treatment you will require before each procedure.

Each treatment session lasts 30-45 minutes and on average it takes 3-4 treatment sessions, spaced 3 monthly to completely eradicate the abnormal tissue. This depends on the individual's initial length of the Barrett's oesophagus and the response to treatment.

Post procedure care

- You will be monitored in the endoscopy recovery area until you are completely awake. Since you have had anaesthesia you will need someone to take you home and you are advised to take the day off from work. You should refrain from signing any important documents and not operate heavy machinery, including driving.
- You may notice some soreness and swallowing difficulty over the next few days, but this will settle down. You can return to your normal daily activities the day after the HALO procedure.
- You will be required to take water and nourishing fluids only for the first 24 hours and thereafter a soft diet for 3-5 days. You will be given instructions and advice on discharge.
- You will be given specific instructions on acid reflux medications after the procedure. Generally, you will be asked to increase the PPI medication you are on (Pantoprazole, Esomeprazole, Rabeprazole etc.), to twice a day until you have follow-up endoscopy that will be in 3 months. You may also be given additional temporary medications (Sucralfate, Nizatidine etc.) with specific instructions on taking it if required.

Possible risks and adverse events

Although it is a safe procedure, there are some risks that you should be aware of. Patients may experience the following side effects:

- The most common side effects are sore throat, chest discomfort, swallowing difficulty for a few days. If the pain persists after you arrive home, you can take paracetamol or contact us for further advice.
- On rare occasions bleeding or a tear can occur; if this happens you will be treated accordingly and may need hospital admission for a few days.
- In certain patients after a few days/weeks after treatment, narrowing of the oesophagus can happen as it heals, resulting in swallowing difficulty. If this were to occur you will need to contact us so that we can see you and repeat your endoscopy to stretch (dilate) the oesophagus which will improve your swallowing.

Should you require more information or talk to the specialist doctor performing your procedure please contact Riverview Endoscopy on 9385 6938

HALO (RFA) PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please read carefully

You must fast for 6 hours before the test. When fasting have nothing to eat or drink. However, you may take medications with a sip of water.

Morning Appointments

Have nothing to eat or drink after midnight.

Afternoon Appointments

Have nothing to eat or drink after 7 am.