

**Oesophagoose Meeting Minutes.** Aug 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 2.00pm

**Announcements and Professional update:** Claire Sedgwick

- A study is being carried out for NHS England regarding patients treated during the last 6 months, entitled 'Improving services for patients with Upper Gastrointestinal Cancer'. The reason is to consider why people in the north are getting this cancer more than those living in the south. Anna Haste has until the end of August to recruit 30 patients.
- 4 Consultants are on holiday and Junior Consultants have been running the department very well and everything has been going well considering there have only been 2 surgeons rather than 4 or 5.
- There is a nursing crisis at the RVI as nights are barely covered. They have recruited in the Philippines but are awaiting the nurses to pass tests. There is a debate about the way the system is run now.

**Whole group discussion/Q&A led by Gail Etherington:**

- Gail talked about some recipe ideas to help motivate interest in food and get some variety into their diet and at the same time make it easier to consume. She is compiling a file which will be available at every meeting for people to look through. photograph for personal use or add to.
- People thought this was a good idea and would have been helpful when first out of hospital or off the feeding tube.
- Gail reported that there are lots of recipes and advice on preventing weight loss on the Macmillan website which includes 'Eating well post Gastrectomy'. There are also booklets available at the Maggie's Centre, invaluable advice from Jill and Janine and for Oesophageal patients there are tips and recipes on [www.opa.org.uk](http://www.opa.org.uk)

**This led to a more general discussion with the following comments:**

- One person mentioned ensuring food is chewed well
- Spicy food affects people in different ways, some can tolerate it early afternoon while others cannot tolerate it at all.
- Chocolate burns badly if reflux happens.
- A lot of trial and error. Some people now find they cannot drink tea or coffee.
- Someone suggested eating digestive biscuits through the night did not cause a problem which may be surprising to others.
- Advice is stop eating at 7.30pm and no drinks after 8pm in general. Timing and amount consumed in the evening seems to make a difference in order to lessen reflux.
- Someone commented that the dietician recommended peppermint for trapped wind.

**Other questions raised:**

- How can you counteract burning in the throat after acid reflux?  
There seemed to be no definite answer to this but a suggestion to prevent this was Gaviscon and Aloe Vera juice at night.
- Does anyone experience tiredness?  
Many agreed. It could be a lack of food and some have to go out in the afternoon or they fall asleep.

**There followed a more general discussion around eating led by Claire S:**

- The reason for feeling tired after a meal is that the blood supply is going to the stomach so it makes you feel sluggish. It normally takes 3 hours for food to move out of the stomach.
- Empty v Full stomach? Important to realise when not to eat that extra forkful-difficult decision as symptoms only present themselves afterwards and not before. Advice from the nursing staff is that a coffee cup full of food is generally the correct portion. Use a bowl or small plate that is the right size to prevent over-eating. Claire pointed out that the stomach won't stretch much after an Oesophagectomy post-op, but over years it may stretch a little.
- Situations vary among patients. Some eat just because they have to and go by the clock while another ate a lot of ice cream and cake and put on 2 stones.
- Someone stated that sickness usually lasts half an hour after eating-usually through over-eating.

**3.00-3.30p.m. Break up into small group discussion.**

**Next Meeting** Wednesday October 11th, 2017. 2.00pm Maggie's