



## **Gastroscopy-Patient Information Sheet**

This information sheet is for patients who are having an examination of the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum, known as a gastroscopy. The leaflet explains the reasons for the examination, what is involved and any possible risks or side effects.

A gastroscopy is an examination of the inside of the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and duodenum, using a long flexible instrument called a gastroscope. An image is projected from the tip of the gastroscope on to a screen.

### **Reasons for having this examination**

Diagnostic - the doctor or nurse specialist can see any abnormalities;

Investigative - small samples (biopsies) can be taken from the lining of the oesophagus, stomach or duodenum for laboratory tests;

Treatment - some polyps (small bumps in the lining) or other abnormalities can be removed treatment (such as an internal injection, heat treatment, clips or bands) may be needed to stop or prevent bleeding Surveillance - to re-examine any previous problems.

### **Preparation for the examination**

For this examination to be successful, the stomach must be as empty as possible.

It is important to have nothing to eat for 6 hours before the test but you can drink clear fluids up until 2 hours before the appointment, then nothing further.

If you have diabetes, or you are taking Warfarin or any other blood thinning medication, you will be given specific instructions. Patients who continue to take warfarin, or who have stopped warfarin just before the test, will need to have a blood test to check their clotting the day before the procedure

You should continue to take any other regular medications as normal (with a small sip of water if this is necessary)

Please bring your completed medical assessment form and the consent form, which you should have read and may already have signed, with you to the Endoscopy Unit.

## **On arrival at the hospital**

Please go straight to the Endoscopy Unit and ring the bell to let the staff know that you have arrived.

You may have to wait for a short while in the waiting area, so it is a good idea to bring something to read.

A nurse will go through your medical history with you, check your pulse and blood pressure, and ask some necessary additional questions. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have.

The nurse will go through the consent form with you, to confirm that you understand the procedure and agree to go ahead with it, and the form should be signed if you have not already done this at home

Before the test is started you will be asked to remove dentures, spectacles / contact lenses.

You do not need to change but should remove your topcoat or jacket. You will then wait in the reception area until you are taken through to the examination room.

A nurse will remain with you throughout the examination.

## **The examination**

You can choose from the following options, having first discussed them with the nurse:

1. A local anaesthetic throat spray (that numbs the throat); **OR**
2. An injection of sedative into a vein to make you relaxed. It may also make you sleepy, but for most patients it induces sleep after the examination, making it a hazy memory; **OR**
3. Both of the above.

While you are lying on your left side on the examination bed, a small mouthpiece will be placed in your mouth and the doctor or nurse specialist will gently insert a small flexible tube (gastroscope) through into your stomach. This is not painful and will not make breathing or swallowing difficult.

The stomach will be gently inflated with air to expand it so that the lining can be seen clearly. Most of the air is sucked out at the end of the test.

A **biopsy** (a small sample of tissue) may be taken during the examination and sent to the laboratory for further tests. Taking biopsies does not cause pain.

The nurse may need to clear saliva from your mouth with suction.

If you are having sedation, oxygen may be given through a soft flexible nasal tube.

Afterwards the gastroscope is removed quickly and easily.

### **After the examination**

If you had a sedative injection you will rest for about an hour in the Unit and then be offered refreshments.

If you had the local anaesthetic throat spray you can have refreshments as soon as your swallowing is back to normal (usually after 20 minutes).

The nurse will tell you the result of the examination before you go home, and you may be given a paper copy of it. Any biopsy results will take longer.

A report and any biopsy results will be sent to your GP and we will send you a copy of any biopsy results.

You will be told what further tests, treatment and / or follow up visit are needed.

### **Going home**

If you had the sedative injection, you must have a responsible friend or relative to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours; if this is a problem, please telephone the endoscopy booking office on 01582 497273 as soon as possible. You must not drive, drink alcohol, operate machinery or make important decisions for 24 hours following the test.

#### **OR**

If you only had the local anaesthetic throat spray, you may return to your normal activities straight away.

### **After you have had a gastroscopy**

You may have a mild sore throat but this will pass and is nothing to worry about.

You may feel a little bloated from some air left in the stomach. Again, this will pass and you should not need to take any medicine.

You can eat and drink as normal, unless advised otherwise (usually following specific treatments)

### **The risks**

This examination is safe but all procedures of this nature can carry a very small risk of:

perforation (a small tear) of the oesophagus or stomach wall. This is a very rare occurrence but might need an operation to repair it.

serious bleeding can occur (risk is less than 1 in 10,000) but is more likely to follow a biopsy. If it occurs you should report to your local Emergency department.

Sedation may be associated with heart and / or lung problems, particularly in the elderly and those with known heart or lung problems.

If you have any concerns about these risks, please speak to the Endoscopy staff before the examination.

There is no alternative test of similar quality to a gastroscopy.

**For further information**

Please telephone the Nurse-In-Charge of the Endoscopy Unit on **01582 497298** (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm).

Or you can go to [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)