

South Infirmary-Victoria University Hospital – Endoscopy Unit

Patient Information for Gastroscopy

Before your appointment

- All medication (including aspirin) should be taken as normal. Bring a list of your medications with you to the hospital.
- If you have any questions or find that you cannot keep this appointment, please contact the Admission Office between 08:00 and 17:00 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday on 021-4926322.
- Please contact the Admissions Department to advise them if you are a Diabetic, as alternative arrangements may need to be made for your admission.
- Don't use dentafix on day of procedure

On the day

- You need to fast from 12 midnight from food and drink
- Leave valuables at home, bring a dressing gown, slippers and something to read.

At the hospital

- Please come to the Admissions, located next to the Out-Patients Department

In the ward

- After the nurse has admitted you, the doctor will talk to you, ask you questions about your health. The doctor will answer any questions you have and will complete the consent process for the procedure.
- You will be asked to remove false teeth and to change into a gown for the procedure and we will ask you to remove your glasses.
- Please let us know if you have loose teeth or crowns as it is possible that these may become dislodged during the procedure.

What is a Gastroscopy?

Your doctor has requested this procedure to help investigate and manage your medical condition.

A gastroscopy is an examination of the upper gut. The procedure involves passing a narrow flexible instrument through the mouth, into the gullet (oesophagus) and then into the stomach and duodenum to examine the lining. This allows the

doctor to see if there are any problems such as ulcers or inflammation. The procedure can take between 5 and 15 minutes. If it takes longer please do not worry.

Sometimes it is helpful to take a biopsy – a sample of the lining. A small instrument called forceps, passes through the gastroscope to 'pinch' out a tiny bit of the lining (about the size of a pinhead). This is sent to the laboratory for analysis. Most people find this completely painless.

How is it done?

There are three options for this procedure:

1. **No sedation option:** we will spray a local anaesthetic to the back of your throat. This will make it numb so that you cannot feel the gastroscope. The numbness will last for about half an hour to up to a few hours. The advantage is that you can leave soon after the procedure is finished. You will be fully aware of the procedure; most patients find this acceptable.
2. **Sedation option:** We will give you a sedative (by injection into a vein) to make you feel relaxed and sleepy. The sedative will not put you to sleep (This is **not** a general anaesthetic). This option means you may be less aware of the procedure.

The disadvantages to this option are:

- You will need to stay whilst you recover which may take up to an hour or more
- You will need to be escorted home
- The injection may continue to have a mild sedative effect for up to 24 hours and may also leave you unsteady on your feet for a while.

3. I.V sedation and spray

If you choose sedation you **must** arrange for a responsible adult to come with you and to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours. You will not be able to drive yourself. **If you haven't arranged for an escort to take you home and stay with you, we will have to cancel the procedure.**

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What happens during the procedure?

We will make you comfortable on a trolley lying on your left side. We will attach a monitor to you. The doctor will give you the injection or throat spray. There is a small risk of damage to teeth, crowns or dental bridgework. We will put a plastic guard into your mouth so that you do not damage your teeth or damage our instrument. We will also put a plastic 'peg' on your finger to monitor your pulse and oxygen levels. For your comfort and reassurance, a theatre nurse will stay with you throughout.

As the gastroscope which is a thin flexible telescope goes through your mouth you may gag slightly, this is quite normal and will not interfere with your breathing. The video camera at the top of endoscope may be used to take pictures internally. During the procedure, we will put some air into your stomach so that we have a clear view; this may make you burp and belch a little. This is also quite normal but some people find this unpleasant. We will remove the air at the end of the procedure. The doctor may take one or more biopsies this is painless. The endoscope is then gently pulled out. The procedure takes about 5-15 minutes. If you are too uncomfortable the procedure will be stopped. The procedure takes about 5-15 minutes.

Are there any side-effects or complications from having a gastroscopy?

Most gastroscopies are done without any problem. Some people have a mild sore throat for a day or so afterwards. You may feel tired or sleepy for several hours if you have a sedative. There is a slightly increased risk of developing a chest infection or pneumonia following a gastroscopy. Occasionally the endoscope causes some damage to the gut. This may cause bleeding, infection, and rarely perforation. If any of the following occur within 48 hours after a gastroscopy, consult a doctor immediately:

Abdominal pain. (In particular, if it becomes gradually worse, and is different or more intense to any 'usual' indigestion pains or heartburn that you may have).

- Fever (raised temperature).
- Difficulty breathing

- Vomiting blood

After the procedure

If you are given a **throat spray**, we will advise you not to have anything to eat or drink until the numbness has worn off, this may take an hour. After this, you can eat and drink normally.

If you have **sedation**, we will take you to the ward area while the sedation wears off.

When you are sufficiently awake, we will give a drink and something to eat, you can then go home. We advise you not to drive, operate machinery, return to work, drink alcohol or sign any legally binding documents for a 24 hour period after the procedure. We also advise you to have a responsible adult stay with you for 24 hours.

Afterwards, the back of your throat may feel sore for the rest of the day and you may feel bloated if some of the air remains in your stomach. Both these discomforts will pass and need no medication.

If you experience any of the following

- Severe pain
- Black tarry stools
- Persistent bleeding

contact your GP or the hospital at 021-4926100

When do I know the results?

Final results from biopsies will be given to you either by the Consultant or General Practitioner who requested the procedure. These results can take 4-6 weeks to come through. You should discuss details of these results and any further treatment with your Consultant/GP. If you have not heard from us within 2 months please contact the Consultant or your GP treating you for further details.

Alternatives and other procedures that may be required:

In some cases, depending on individual factors such as the symptoms present and the condition being investigated, there may be an alternative to having a Gastroscopy, such as a barium meal or CT scan:

If at any stage you have any queries please make us aware so that we can help you.