

GASTROSCOPY

GENERAL INFORMATION

Gastroscopy is looking down into your stomach with a special instrument called a gastroscope. A gastroscopy is done for several reasons. This is a very common procedure and your doctor would have explained to you why you need it.

DIAGNOSIS

There are several ways to investigate the stomach. Only with a gastroscopy, however, can the inside of the stomach be seen directly.

PRE-PROCEDURE PREPARATION

- Do not eat or drink anything for 6 hours before the procedure.
- You will be given an intravenous injection or infusion with sedation. You will feel drowsy.
- Your throat will be sprayed with a local anaesthetic and your throat will feel numb or swollen or dry.

THE PROCEDURE

- The gastroscope is an instrument with lenses in it and a light at its tip. It is smooth, flexible, and almost as big as your little finger.
- You will be positioned on a comfortable table. Your mouth and throat will be sprayed to make them numb.
- You will be given medicine to keep you drowsy during the procedure. The gastroscope will be introduced gently into your mouth and then into your throat and down your gullet, which will also be examined on the way down to the stomach.
- When in the stomach the tip of the gastroscope can be turned in all directions and the wall of the stomach can be examined thoroughly. The gastroscope will be advanced through the exit of the stomach and into the duodenum for about 15cm.
- If anything suspicious is seen, a tiny piece will be taken (a biopsy) for examination in the laboratory.
- When the examination is complete the gastroscope is removed.
- The medicine that made you feel drowsy will be stopped and you should become alert again quickly.
- The entire procedure takes around 30 minutes. Most patients remember very little of the procedure and think it took only a few minutes.
- When your blood pressure, pulse and breathing are stable and you are completely alert, you should be able to go home with a responsible adult.
- Your doctor will discuss the results of the gastroscopy with you.

AFTERCARE

- In one to two hours, when your throat is not numb any longer, you may eat or drink.
- You may not drive or work for the rest of the day.

COMPLICATIONS

- Complications are infrequent after a gastroscopy. It is important however for you to remember the following.
- Very rarely the gastroscope may perforate an organ. In the unlikely event that this happens, you will have to have an operation to have this perforation repaired.
- If a biopsy is done, very infrequently there may be a large bleed. Your doctor will decide how best to manage this.