

## Patient information

# Gastroscopy – Outpatients

You have been referred by your doctor to have a gastroscopy. This information booklet has been written to explain the procedure. This will help you to make an informed decision before consenting to the procedure. If you are unable to attend your appointment, please inform us as soon as possible **01284 713551**.

**Please ensure you read this booklet and the enclosed consent form thoroughly. Please also complete the enclosed health questionnaire.**

You may be contacted by an endoscopy trained nurse before your procedure to go through the admission process and answer any queries you may have. If you are not contacted please come to your appointment at the time stated in your letter.

**Please note your appointment time is your arrival time on the unit and not the time of your procedure.**

***If you have any mobility issues or if there is a possibility you could be pregnant, please contact the appointment staff on 01284 713551***

Please remember there will be other patients in the unit who may arrive after you but are taken in for their procedure before you, this is for medical reasons or they are seeing a different doctor.

Due to limited space available and to maintain other patients' privacy and dignity, we only allow patients (and carers) through to the ward area. Relatives/escorts will be contacted once you are ready for collection.

The endoscopy unit endeavours to offer single sex facilities, and we aim to make you stay as comfortable and stress free as possible.

## Medication

If you are having a gastroscopy for the first time and you are taking anti-ulcer medication please stop these TWO WEEKS before your gastroscopy date, examples of these medications are:

- Lansoprazole
- Omeprazole
- Esomeprazole
- Pantoprazole
- Rabeprazole

However, if you are having a repeat gastroscopy procedure it is very important that you **do not stop** these medications prior to the procedure.

If you are taking **WARFARIN, CLOPIDOGREL, RIVAROXABAN or any other anticoagulant (blood thinning medication)**, please contact the appointment staff on 01284 713551, your GP or anticoagulation nurse, as special arrangements may be necessary.

**Diabetic patients** should contact their diabetic nurse or GP, please inform them that you are required to be nil by mouth for **6 hours** prior to your procedure (see section – How do I prepare for my Gastroscopy).

**Please ensure you bring your current medications with you when you attend for your procedure.**

***If you are in any doubt whether you should stop or continue your medication, please ring 01284 712653***

## How do I prepare for the procedure?

It is necessary to have clear views and for this the stomach must be completely empty.

It is very important that you **do not** eat or drink for at least **6 hours** before your appointment or this could lead to the cancellation of your procedure. If your appointment is in the afternoon, please only eat light meals prior to your **6 hours** of being nil by mouth.

## **What happens when I arrive?**

On arrival to the endoscopy unit please report to reception where the receptionist will check your personal details. You will be asked to take a seat in the waiting area until you are collected by a nurse and taken through to one of our admission rooms. Due to limited space we are unable to allow anyone to accompany you unless they are a carer. We will contact your relative/escort once you are ready to be collected.

You will be taken into the admission room where a nurse will explain the procedure and they will ask you about your health, medications and allergies. They will take your pulse and blood pressure. If you are a diabetic your blood glucose level will be checked.

The nurse will discuss the consent form with you and answer any questions that you may have. We want to make sure you understand the procedure and its implications.

You can expect to be on the unit **2 - 4 hours**.

## **What is a Gastroscopy?**

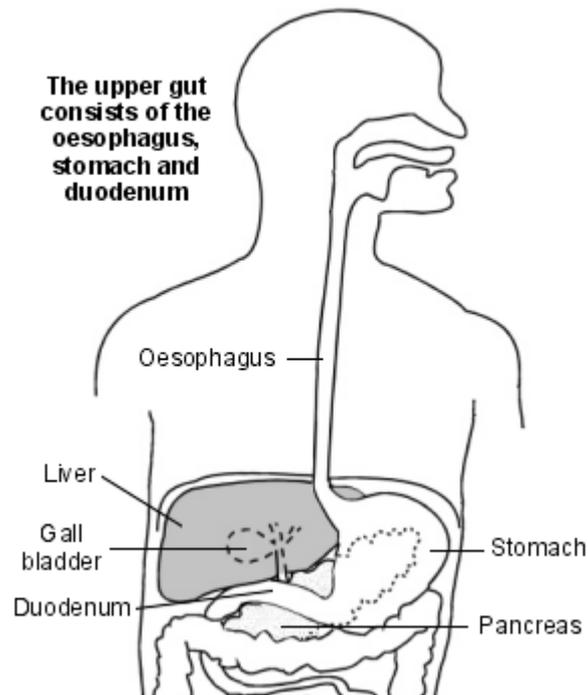
A gastroscopy is a procedure that allows the endoscopist to use a thin, flexible tube called an endoscope to look inside the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and first part of the small intestine (duodenum).

The gastroscope is connected to a television system, it has a light and a camera built into the end. Pictures are then seen on a television monitor and pictures are taken which will be stored on your medical record.

This examination may identify the cause of your symptoms. Sometimes we can treat them during the procedure. The procedure usually takes around 10-15 minutes.

## **Why do I need a gastroscopy?**

Your doctor is concerned about the symptoms you are experiencing with your digestive system. Therefore, a gastroscopy is used to find out if there are any problems with your digestive system. It also helps your doctor to decide on further treatment, if necessary.



A gastroscopy is used to investigate a variety of symptoms, for example:

- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting /vomiting blood
- Heartburn
- Inability or difficulty swallowing
- Anaemia
- Weight loss
- Passing black motion
- Recurring indigestion
- Monitoring of long-term conditions

A gastroscopy may diagnose the following:

- Inflammation
- Infection
- Coeliac Disease
- Ulcers
- Helicobacter Pylori (this can cause ulcers, gastritis and cancer)
- Cancer

## Alternatives to a Gastroscopy

A gastroscopy is the best way of looking at your oesophagus and your stomach. However, a Barium Meal is an alternative examination, it is X-Ray based. It does not provide such detailed picture of your oesophagus and stomach; it also does not

allow treatment to be performed or biopsies to be taken. Therefore, you may still need a gastroscopy. If you wish to discuss these alternative tests, please contact your GP or hospital doctor.

## **How a Gastroscopy is performed?**

A gastroscopy often takes less than 15 minutes to complete, it may take longer if it is being used to treat a condition or biopsies (small samples of tissue) are taken.

You will be escorted into the procedure room and introduced to the team in the room. The endoscopist will check that you have full understanding of the procedure, what it entails and that you are willing to go ahead.

In order to monitor your heart rate and breathing the nurse looking after you will place a probe onto your finger. They may also monitor your blood pressure by placing a cuff on to your arm.

A nurse will be with you at all times giving you guidance and support. You will be asked to remove any dentures and your glasses, if you have opted to have throat spray this will be given at this point. You will be asked to lie on your left side; the nurse will place a mouth guard into your mouth to protect your teeth and gums. If you have chosen to have sedation this will be given at this time. You will be given oxygen nasally.

The gastroscope will then be inserted gently into your mouth and passed over your tongue to the back of your throat. The gastroscope is passed down the oesophagus, into your stomach and then to the duodenum.

We would like to reassure you that although the test can sometimes be a little uncomfortable it is not painful, and you can breathe normally. Any saliva or other secretions produced during the procedure will be removed using a small suction tube, rather like the one used at the dentist.

## **What is a biopsy?**

A biopsy is a small piece of tissue which is removed through the gastroscope using tiny forceps. This procedure is painless, and you will probably not be aware of it being taken.

## Medication options for the procedure

For many people a gastroscopy is only minimally uncomfortable, and sedation is not required. If you are concerned about potential discomfort or would like sedation for other reason, please let us know.

There are two options:

1. **No Sedation:** We will numb your throat by spraying a local anaesthetic to the back of your throat. It will numb it so you cannot feel the gastroscope. The numbness lasts for about one hour.

The advantage is that you can leave as soon as the procedure is completed, and you have been discharged by a nurse. You may resume your normal activities such as working and driving. You will be fully aware of the procedure; most patients find this acceptable.

2. **Intravenous Conscious Sedation:** We will give you sedation through a cannula to make you feel relaxed. The sedative will make you sleepy and relaxed however; it **will not** put you to sleep (this is **not** a general anaesthetic). This option may take away some awareness of the procedure.

The disadvantage of this option is that you will need a responsible adult with you for **24 hours**. They will need to collect you from the Endoscopy Unit and stay with you for at least 24 hours. You will not be able to drive yourself home, go back to work, operate machinery, drink alcohol or sign any legal documents for the 24 hours period following the procedure.

## Are there any risks or complications?

As with every medical procedure the risk must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure carried out. The doctor who has requested the procedure will have considered this very carefully.

Diagnostic gastroscopy procedures carry a very small risk of complications:

- **Sore Throat** – you may experience a sore throat for a day or two.
- **Dislodge teeth, crowns or bridgework** – there is a small chance that loose teeth, crowns or bridgework can be damaged or dislodged during the procedure. Please inform the nurse prior to your procedure.

- **Haemorrhage (bleeding)** – If you have biopsies there will be some bleeding at the biopsy site but this only last a few seconds. We will go through this after your test.
- **Perforation (tear)** – the risk of this is small. The risk is increased if any treatment is performed.
- **Pneumonia** – there is a risk of this if you have severe breathing difficulties such as COPD etc. Therefore, you should not eat or drink for 6 hours prior to your procedure.
- **Reactions to medications given** – you may experience a reaction to the sedation given, this is rare but if this should happen, we do have medications to reverse the effects of the sedative.

As with all tests this procedure will not always show up all abnormalities and on very rare occasions, a significant abnormality may not be identified. If you have any questions about this, please discuss it with the person who referred you or speak to us then you attend for your appointment.

## **After the procedure**

We will tell you as much as possible about what was found after the procedure; however biopsy results will take a few weeks to arrive.

## **If you have had throat spray**

You will be unable to eat or drink for one hour after your procedure. You will be able to go home shortly after the procedure, or even go back to work or drive if you need to.

## **If you have had sedation**

You will be given time to recover quietly until the immediate effect of sedation has worn off. You will be offered a drink and something to eat while you wait for your escort home. **This person must come to the unit to collect you. You must have supervision by a responsible adult at home for at least 24 hours following sedation.**

The sedation lasts longer than you might imagine, so it is very important that after your procedure you do not do any of the following for at least 24 hours:

- Drive a car
- Operate machinery
- Smoke
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal documents

## **Discharge**

When you are ready to be discharged from the procedure the nurse will tell you what was seen during your procedure and what to do next. They will record your observations and answer any questions you may have.

## **After you have been discharged**

Serious side effects from this procedure are rare, as previously stated. You may experience a sore throat. You may also feel a little bloated if some of the air that we use for the test remains. Both these things will pass and need no medication.

**If you experience any of the following problems, please contact your GP immediately informing them you have had a gastroscopy:**

- Severe abdominal pain (not cramp caused by wind)
- A firm and swollen abdomen
- High temperature or feeling feverish
- Vomiting or vomiting blood
- Passing black tarry stools

### **Please contact:**

- The Endoscopy Unit which is open from 08.00am to 9.30pm Monday to Thursday and 08.00am to 6.00pm Friday. Our contact number is 01284 713952. If you have any queries that you wish to discuss with an Endoscopy Nurse out of these times, please contact the West Suffolk Hospital switchboard on 01284 713000 asking to speak to the On-Call Endoscopy Nurse.
- Your GP
- Or contact the A & E department at the West Suffolk Hospital

**You should contact A&E if you experience severe pain in the abdomen, a fever, vomiting, vomiting blood, passing a large amount of blood after the test. Please ensure you take your endoscopy report with you.**

Please be advised that patients are unable to donate blood for 4 months following an endoscopy procedure, as directed by the NHS Blood and Transplant Service.

## **Summary of important information**

As with every medical procedure the risk must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure carried out. The doctor who has requested the procedure will have considered this very carefully.

However, it is your decision whether you wish to go ahead with the procedure or not and you are free to change your mind at any time.

**It is everyone's aim for you to be seen as soon as possible. However, the unit can be busy, and your gastroscopy may be delayed if emergencies occur, these patients will obviously be given priority over the less urgent cases.**

Due to the limited space available and to maintain other patients' privacy and dignity we only allow patient (and carers) through to the ward area. Relatives/escorts will be contacted once you are ready for collection.

Please do not bring valuables (e.g. jewellery etc.) to the hospital as the hospital cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property during your time on these premises. We advise you keep your belongings with you at all times.

Training doctors and other health professionals is essential to the continuation of the National Health Service and improving the quality of care. Your procedure/treatment may provide an important opportunity for such training under the careful supervision of an experienced endoscopist. You can however decline to be involved in the formal training of medical and other students; this will not affect your care and treatment.

# Checklist

## Things to remember before your procedure:

- Read all the information we have sent you carefully
- Fill in the Health Questionnaire
- Do not have anything for at least **6 hours** before your procedure
- Check for specific medication instructions
- Transport arrangements have been made if you are having sedation

## Please bring the following items with you:

- This booklet
- Your completed Health questionnaire
- Your Consent Form (you do not need to complete this, it will be done on the unit prior to your procedure)
- Please bring all current medications with you

## Contact Numbers

- Cancellation/change of appointment **Tel 01284 713551**
- Pre-assessment for medical related advice **Tel 01284 712653**
- Endoscopy Unit **Tel 01284 713952**
- Out of hours **Tel 01284 713000**

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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