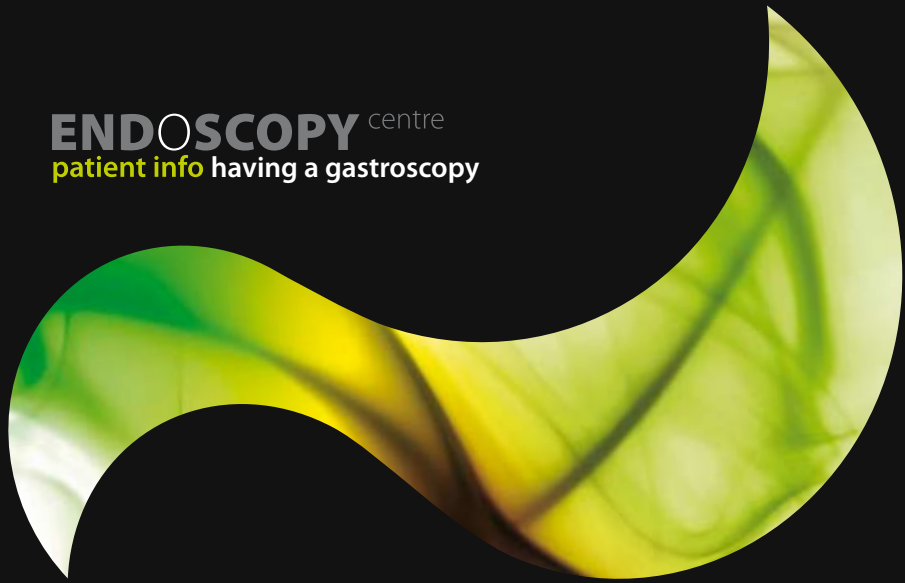


ENDOSCOPY centre
patient info having a gastroscopy



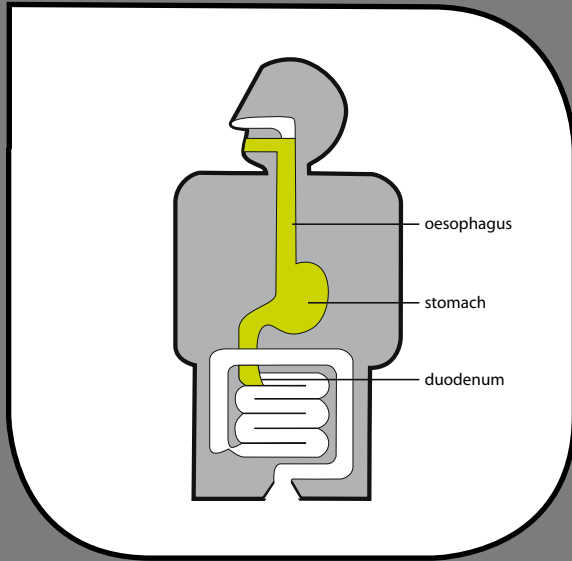


WHAT IS A GASTROSCOPY?

Gastroscopy is a test which allows the doctor to look directly at the lining of the oesophagus (the gullet), the stomach and around the first bend of the small intestine – the duodenum. *(See diagram opposite).*

In order to do the test a gastroscope is carefully passed through your mouth into the stomach. The gastroscope is a long flexible tube, with a bright light at the end. Looking down the tube, the doctor gets a clear view of the lining of the stomach and can check whether any disease is present.

Sometimes the doctor takes a biopsy a sample of tissue, which is removed painlessly through the gastroscope, using tiny forceps. This is then sent to the laboratory for further tests.





PREPARATION FOR THE TEST

To allow a clear view, the stomach must be empty. Therefore please have nothing to eat for at least 6 hours before your test.

You may drink water up to 2 hours before the test but nothing after that.

You can continue to take any medication you are on (with a small amount of water).

Please let us know at least a week in advance if you are diabetic or on warfarin by telephoning the Endoscopy Centre on 020 7908 2181.



ON ARRIVAL AT THE ENDOSCOPY CENTRE

Please go to the Endoscopy Centre reception, which has a dedicated entrance at 40 Nottingham Place (next door to the main hospital entrance).

Access to the Endoscopy Centre can be gained by pressing the Endoscopy Centre buzzer.

You will be greeted by our Endoscopy Co-ordinator, who will verify your personal details and preferred method of payment.

An Endoscopy nurse will then prepare for your procedure. If you have any worries or questions at this stage don't be afraid to ask. Staff will want you to be as relaxed and informed as possible for the test and will be happy to answer your queries.

Your consultant will explain the test to you and will ask you to sign a consent form. This is to ensure that you understand the test and its implications. Please tell the consultant or nurse if you have had any allergies or bad reactions to drugs or other tests.



WHAT DOES THE TEST INVOLVE?

In the examination room you will be made comfortable on a couch, lying on your left side.

A nurse will stay with you throughout the test.

Your consultant will then insert a small flexible tube (gastroscope) into your stomach. This will not cause you any pain, nor will it interfere with your breathing at any time.

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

If you get a lot of saliva in your mouth, the nurse will gently suck it out.

The test usually takes up to 15 minutes. When the test is finished, the gastroscope is removed quickly and easily.



AFTER THE EXAMINATION

You will rest after the procedure until you feel awake enough to get up. This can take up two hours.

If you have had a sedative injection you may eat and drink as soon as you feel able. However if you have had the local anaesthetic throat spray you will have to wait until your swallowing reflex is back to normal (usually after about an hour).

The back of your throat may also feel sore, this is usually eased by having a drink. You may also feel a little bloated if some air has remained in your stomach. Both these discomforts will pass, and need no medication.

If you have had a sedative injection it is essential that someone collect you to take you home.

Your consultant will be able to tell you the results of your test before you go home. However if a sample (biopsy) has been taken then, the results will usually take two days.



ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

A gastroscopy is a very safe examination, but very rarely problems can occur.

Perforation – this is a small tear in the lining of the oesophagus (the gullet) or stomach, which can happen during the test. It may not need treating at all, but may need repairing with surgery, in which case you would need to stay in hospital.

Bleeding is extremely rare after Gastroscopy. If you think you might be bleeding please contact your GP, or the Endoscopy Centre on 020 7908 2181 Monday to Friday 8 am – 8 pm. Out of hours 020 7486 1234 and ask for the Duty Sister.