

Gastroscopy with or without enteroscopy

Please read this information and bring it with you when you come for your examination.

ABOUT THE EXAMINATION

Gastroscopy is a visual examination of the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract, including the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. For enteroscopy, a longer instrument is used to examine the upper part of the small bowel.

The doctor steers a thin flexible tube containing a miniature TV camera through your mouth to perform either examination. The procedure takes up to 15-30 minutes, depending on what is found. You can choose to have either sedation or throat spray to numb the back of the throat, though most enteroscopies require sedation.

Biopsy samples can be painlessly taken for laboratory analysis. Treatments can also be performed through the endoscope. These include stretching narrowed areas, removing polyps and swallowed objects, and treatment for bleeding by application of diathermy or heat probes, or injections into the bleeding areas.

RISKS

Before you agree to this procedure you should be aware of the reason for which it is being proposed, the alternatives, and the problems that can occur. No procedure or treatment is totally risk free, but the risks associated with gastroscopy and enteroscopy are usually less than those of the alternatives, and the benefits usually far outweigh the risks.

The main risks are perforation and bleeding, which is more common when the procedure involves treatment, such as removal of a polyp (rare) or oesophageal dilation. The safety record at The London Clinic is unparalleled.

If bleeding occurs, observation and hospital admission may be required, although it usually stops spontaneously. Perforation or bleeding which does not stop may require surgery; however this is extremely rare.

INFORMED CONSENT

Why do we need your consent?

No one has the right to impose examinations or treatment on you without your agreement.

What does it mean?

Your doctor will have told you about the procedure, possible alternatives, and any substantial risks so that you can decide for yourself whether or not to agree to the gastroscopy. There is further information in this pack.

Before signing the consent form you should be satisfied that you have been given all of the information that you require. Please feel free to discuss any aspects of the proposed examination with the nursing staff and the doctor in the Endoscopy Unit.

If you do decide to go ahead, you are at liberty to change your mind, even after signing the consent form.

Consent form

Please read the attached consent form carefully. You will be asked to sign a similar form on the day of the procedure, so that there is a record of your understanding and agreement. You can ask any further questions on the day. Please bring the enclosed documents with you to your appointment.

PREPARATION

Your stomach must be empty, so you must not have had anything to eat for six hours before the procedure. You may drink clear fluids up until four hours before the examination. If it is essential that you take prescription medications after this time, please take them with sips of water only.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

The doctor and/or nurse will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions. The admitting nurse will go through your medical history and check that you are correctly prepared.

You will need to put on a hospital gown, and the doctor will ask you to sign a consent form, giving your permission for the examination. If you choose to have sedation, it will be given by injection through a cannula in a vein in the hand or arm. This will make you sleepy and relaxed.

A local anaesthetic can also be sprayed into the back of your mouth to numb your throat. You will be asked to hold a plastic guard between your teeth. While in a comfortable position on your left-hand side, the doctor will pass the endoscope through your mouth, and into the stomach. This is not painful, and will not affect your breathing.

If you have sedation, you will need to rest in the department for about 45 minutes after the procedure. If you do not have sedation, you can leave immediately and eat and drink when the local anaesthetic has worn off, usually after 30 minutes.

AFTER YOUR GASTROSCOPY

If you have had sedation, a companion must be available to go home with you.

We suggest that you stay at home for the rest of the day. You should not drive a car, operate machinery or make important decisions for 24 hours.

If you do not have sedation, you can return to normal activities as soon as you wish. You can also eat and drink when the local anaesthetic in the throat has worn off, usually around 30-60 minutes.

HELP AND ADVICE

For further guidance about your condition and follow-up appointments please contact your own doctor. For assistance during office hours please call 020 7616 7760. For out of hours enquiries please call The London Clinic on 020 7935 4444 and ask for Bleep 014 (24 hours).