

If you have any concerns about these risks, please speak to your doctor before your examination.

### Any further questions?

Please phone us, we will be happy to help.  
If you have a question about your appointment time and/or how to change it, phone our admin team on 020 7822 3822 / 3824.

If you have a question about your procedure or your medications, contact our clinical team by phoning the hospital switchboard on 020 7272 3070 and ask for bleep number 2711.

Or phone your GP or  
**NHS Direct on 0845 46 47**

The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust  
Magdala Avenue  
London  
N19 5NF  
Phone: 020 7272 3070


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# Gastroscopy

## A patient's guide



.... caring for you 

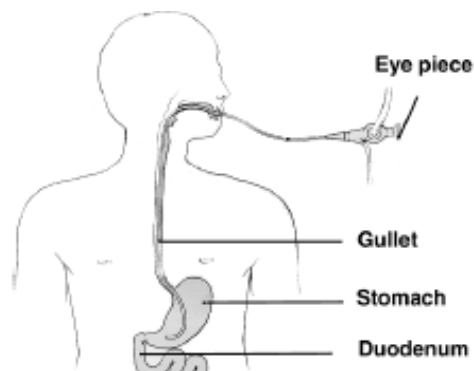
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**This information is for patients who are having a gastroscopy examination. It tells you what is involved, what to expect and any significant risks that there may be.**

A gastroscopy is an examination of the upper part of your digestive system, the gullet, the stomach and the duodenum (the first bend of your intestine).

A long, thin flexible tube with a light on the end (a gastroscope) is passed through the mouth into the stomach. This allows the doctors to see what might be causing your problem.



### Going home

If you had the sedative injection, you must have a responsible friend or relative to take you home and stay with you for 12 hours. You must not drive; drink alcohol; operate equipment, even a kettle; or sign important documents for 24 hours following the test.

If you had the throat spray local anaesthetic, you may drive or operate equipment as normal.

You may have a mild sore throat, but this will pass and is nothing to worry about.

You may feel a little bloated from some air left in the stomach. Again this will pass, and you should not need to take any medicine.

You can eat and drink as normal.

### Risks

This examination is very safe. However, just occasionally a problem can occur, for example:

**Perforation** – this is a little tear in the wall of the gullet or stomach. This may not need treating at all or it may require repairing with surgery in which case you will need to stay in hospital.

**Bleeding** – if you notice blood in your stools or vomit blood, please contact your GP, your local Emergency department or phone the hospital switchboard on 020 7272 3070 and ask for bleep number 2711 (Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm). Slight bleeding following a biopsy is normal.

- The nurse may need to clear saliva from your mouth with suction.
- Sometimes oxygen is given if necessary.
- Your blood pressure, pulse and respirations will be monitored throughout the procedure.
- The examination lasts about 5 – 15 minutes.
- Afterwards the gastroscope is removed quickly and easily.

#### **After the examination**

- You should rest for at least 30 minutes.
- If you had a sedative injection you may be able to eat and drink as soon as you feel able.
- If you had the local anaesthetic throat spray, you may eat and drink as soon as your swallowing reflex is back to normal, (usually after about 20 minutes)
- The doctor will speak to you before you go home about the examination and what was seen. Any biopsy results will take longer.
- A letter will be sent to your GP with the results.

#### **Preparation for the examination**

- For this examination to be successful and for the doctor to have a clear view, your stomach must be empty.
- So it is important to have nothing to eat for six hours before your test. You may drink clear water up until two hours before your appointment.
- If you have diabetes, you will be given a morning appointment and specific instructions depending on your medication. Please phone the Day Treatment Centre on 020 7288 3820 if you have not been given a morning appointment.
- If you are taking Proton Pump Inhibitors such as Lansoprazole, Omeprazole, Pantoprazole, Esomeprazole or Rabeprazole. Please stop taking this for two weeks prior to the date of examination.
- You can continue taking your normal medicines up to two hours before your procedure.
- Please bring any tablets or medicines that you are taking with you (in their containers).

**Important – If you are taking warfarin or clopidogrel, please phone the hospital on 020 7272 3070 and ask for bleep number 2711( senior endoscopy nurse) for advice regarding your anticoagulation treatment.**

**You can contact them Monday –Friday 09:00-17:00.**

## On arrival at the hospital

- Please go straight to the Day Treatment Centre, level 3. A nurse will check your blood pressure and pulse, and also answer any questions you may have.
- You will be asked to fill in a form with your medical and personal details.
- If you are allergic to any medication or are taking warfarin, aspirin or clopidogrel, please tell the nurse.
- You will be given a gown to change into but can keep on your underwear, skirt or trousers.
- The doctor will explain the procedure and ask you to sign the consent form to confirm that you understand the examination and agree to go ahead with it.
- You will be asked to remove any spectacles, contact lenses and denture; they will be kept safely.
- The nurses will stay with you through the examination.

## The examination

After a discussion with the doctor about any anaesthetic, you will have:

1. a local anaesthetic spray (numbing) on the back of your throat,
2. or sedation (not a general anaesthetic), an injection of sedative into a vein in your hand, to make you relaxed. This may make you sleepy too, but for most patients it induces sleep after the examination, making it a hazy memory;
3. or both the above.

Then while you are lying comfortably on your side, a small mouthpiece will be placed in your mouth and the doctor will pass a small flexible tube (the endoscope) through it into your stomach. This can be uncomfortable but not painful, and it will not make breathing difficult.

- Some air will be passed into the stomach to expand it so that the lining can be seen more clearly. This air is sucked out at the end of the examination.
- A biopsy (a small sample of the stomach lining) may be taken during the examination to be sent to the laboratory for more tests. You cannot feel this being done.