

Summary of important information

A Gastroscopy is a safe procedure and a very good way to investigate your symptoms. Risks and complications are rare and the benefits outweigh the risks.

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 investigation may be delayed. If emergencies occur, these patients will obviously be given priority over the less urgent cases.

Please do not bring valuables to the hospital. The hospital cannot accept any responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property during your time on these premises.

If you are unable to keep your appointment, please notify us on **01634 825394** as soon as possible.

Endoscopy Unit
Sunderland Day Case Centre
Medway NHS Foundation Trust
Windmill Road
Gillingham
Kent ME7 5NY
01634 830000

PIL00001212-3

Date: September 2015 Review Date: September 2017

Sunderland Day Case Centre Endoscopy

Understanding Gastroscopy (Upper GI Endoscopy)



www.medway.nhs.uk

Checklist

Things to remember before your procedure

- Read the booklet carefully.
- Fill in the questionnaire and return it in the pre-paid envelope.
- Note appointment date in your diary.
- Nothing to eat **for 6 hours** before your test. You may however drink water until **2 hours** prior to your appointment.
- Please bring a list of medication you are currently taking.
- Transport arrangements made if you are having sedation.

If you wish to discuss any areas of concern, or need more information, in particular to get advice on medication, please contact the Endoscopy Unit on the following telephone number:

**Telephone Number:
01634 825027/5028**

Side effects

Serious side effects from this procedure are rare but for the rest of the day you may have a sore throat. You may also feel a little bloated if some air we use in the test has been left behind. Both of these things will pass off and need no medication.

If you experience any of the following problems please contact the Endoscopy Unit or out of hours the Accident and Emergency Unit 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

Contact the Endoscopy Department during office hours, 7.30am to 6.00pm on:
01634 825027/5028

However if you need urgent advice out of these hours please contact or report to:

Medway Maritime Hospital by telephone on **01634-830000** and ask for the Sunderland Day case on **Ext.5601**

After the Test

If you have had only throat spray you will be able to go home straight away after the test, or even go back to work or drive if you need to.

If you have had sedation you will be given time to sleep and rest quietly until the immediate effects of sedation has worn off. This should take about one hour.

You will be offered a drink and something to eat once the throat spray has worn off (usually about 30 mins)

This person must come to the Unit to collect you.

You must have supervision at home for at least 12 hours.

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

- Drive a car
- Operate machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any important documents

What is a Gastroscopy?

A Gastroscopy (also known as an upper gastro-intestinal endoscopy), is a procedure that enables the doctor to examine the lining of the upper part of your gastro-intestinal tract. This is done by passing a long flexible tube (gastroscope) through your mouth and gently passing it over your tongue to the back of your throat and down into your gullet (oesophagus), stomach and the first part of your small intestine (duodenum).

The gastroscope is connected to a television system and has a mini camera built into the end. Pictures are then seen on a television monitor. By examining your stomach the cause of your symptoms may be found, sometimes we are able to treat them.

The test usually takes between 5 and 10 minutes. You can expect to be on the unit about 2 to 4 hours depending on whether you have Throat Spray or Sedation.

Why do I need a Gastroscopy?

Your doctor is concerned about the symptoms you have been having with your upper digestive system. A Gastroscopy is a good way of finding out whether there is a problem, or not. 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 to swallow
- Anaemia

So what does a Gastroscopy involve?

You will be introduced to the nurses and Endoscopist who will be with you throughout your Gastroscopy.

The Endoscopist will then check that you have a full understanding of your test and all that it means, and that you are willing to go ahead. At this time you will be asked to sign a consent form if you have not already done so.

You will then be escorted into the procedure room.

Are there any 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 test will have considered this very carefully. Gastroscopy is what is known as an invasive procedure and, therefore, carries risks/complications.

The major risks/complications include:

- Small tear or damage to the lining (less than one person in every 5,000 tests carried out).
- Disturbance of your heart rate and breathing.
- A sore throat or abdominal tenderness. As the flexible tube passes down and around, it brushes against the lining and may cause a small amount of bruising.
- Incomplete gastroscopy occurs if the test is abandoned due to technical difficulty or because it was causing you distress. A further test such as a Barium swallow/meal may be recommended in the future.
- Possible damage to teeth that are decayed or loose.

When you have discussed which option is best for you, you will be asked a number of questions about your medical history and have your pulse and blood pressure taken. (You can expect to be on the Unit for 2 – 4 hours).

If you have any worries or questions at this stage please ask.

What is a Biopsy?

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

Follow-up.

A member of the endoscopy team will discuss what has been seen with you after the procedure. Further follow-up appointment investigations or treatments will also be discussed. Biopsies for histology will have to be sent to Pathology so the results won't be available straight away.

A nurse will be with you at all times, giving guidance and support, you will be asked to remove any loose fitting dentures and then lay on your left side.

She/he will place a mouth guard in your mouth to protect your teeth and gums. In order to monitor your heart rate and breathing, the nurse looking after you will place a probe onto one of your fingers.

The flexible tube will then be inserted gently into your mouth and passed over your tongue to the back of your throat.

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.

The test should take about 5 minutes to complete. If small samples of tissue (biopsies) need to be taken, the test may take a little longer.

Are there alternatives to a Gastroscopy?

A Gastroscopy is the best way of looking at your oesophagus and your stomach. However, a Barium swallow/meal examination is one possible alternative test.

A Barium swallow/meal is an X-ray based test, it does not provide such detailed pictures of your oesophagus and your stomach, and it does not allow treatment to be performed at the same time. Therefore, you may still need to have a Gastroscopy.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact your GP or the doctor who requested the procedure.

How do I prepare for the test?

It is very important that you **following the fasting arrangements on page 2** before your appointment, or this could lead to the cancellation of your appointment. This includes chewing gum and sucking sweets.

Make sure you have arranged for transport home if you are having sedation.

What happens when I arrive?

On arrival, please report to the main reception area at the Sunderland Day Case Unit, where the receptionist will check your personal details.

You will be greeted by the nurse responsible for your care and escorted to the assessment area. Here you will be able to discuss with the nurse about Throat Spray or Sedation.

Please note your appointment time is your arrival time on the Unit, not the time of your test. Your test will happen some time later.

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

Choosing how to have the test

Many patients are concerned at the thought of swallowing the endoscope, but we would like to reassure you that whilst the test is not painful you may experience some discomfort. It is the practice of this Unit to offer a choice of throat spray with or without light sedation.

Throat Spray – Local Anaesthetic will be sprayed into the back of your throat to make it numb. You will be aware of the procedure and the doctor and nurse will be able to explain things to you during the test. You will be allowed to go home straightaway and go back to work if you are required to do so.

Sedation – A light sedation is given through an injection in your arm. It makes you sleepy and relaxed and it will take away most awareness of the procedure. Please note it is not a general anaesthetic. **You will NEED someone to accompany you to and from the Unit.** You will **NOT** be able to drive home yourself, go back to work, operate machinery, drink alcohol or sign any important documents for 24 hours.