



**Spire Healthcare**

## **Treatment summary**

### **Diagnostic tests: gastroscopy**

#### **What's a gastroscopy?**

A gastroscopy is an examination of your oesophagus (gullet), stomach and duodenum (the first part of the small intestine). This is done using a thin, flexible, tube-like telescope called an endoscope. The endoscope is passed through the mouth and into the gullet. The test may also be simply referred to as an endoscopy, or OGD (oesophagogastro-duodenoscopy).

A gastroscopy is useful for finding out what is causing symptoms, or as a check-up for certain gastrointestinal conditions. During the procedure, your doctor may take a biopsy – a sample of the lining of the oesophagus, stomach or duodenum – for laboratory analysis.

Gastroscopy is routinely done as an out-patient or day-case procedure, with no overnight stay. You may be given a sedative to help ensure that you are relaxed and comfortable during the procedure. After sedation, most people have very little memory of the test.

Your doctor will explain the benefits and risks of having a gastroscopy, and will also discuss the alternatives to the procedure.

#### **About the procedure**

Your doctor may spray a local anaesthetic into the back of your throat or give you a lozenge to suck to numb the throat area. If you are having sedation, this may be given through a small plastic tube (cannula) placed in a vein in the back of your hand.

With you resting on your side, your doctor will place a mouth guard over your teeth before carefully putting the endoscope into your mouth. You will be asked to swallow to help the endoscope pass into the oesophagus and down towards the stomach. Air will be passed through the tube and into the stomach to make the lining easier to see. When this happens, you may briefly feel a sensation of fullness or nausea.

The endoscope passes through your oesophagus, and not the windpipe, so you will be able to breathe normally. A nurse may help the doctor by using a suction tube to remove excess saliva from your mouth during the procedure.

At the end of the endoscope, a tiny light and lens allow your doctor to see the lining of the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. If necessary, a small biopsy will be taken for analysis. This is a quick, painless process but you may feel a slight pinch.

Afterwards, the endoscope is gently removed. The test usually takes about 20 minutes. The procedure will not hurt but it may be a bit uncomfortable.

Gastroscopy is a commonly performed and generally safe procedure. For most people, the benefits of having a clear diagnosis are much greater than any disadvantages. However, like all medical procedures, there are some risks.

Your doctor will be experienced at performing gastroscopies, but even so, occasionally a gastroscopy is not completed successfully and may need to be repeated.

Other complications are uncommon, but some people find that it takes a little while for their heart rate and breathing to settle after a gastroscopy. You may need oxygen through a mask for a short time following the procedure.

If you are having a gastroscopy under sedation, there is a slight risk that your heart may stop during the procedure. Resuscitation medication, equipment, and trained personnel are available to help with this.

It's possible for the oesophagus, stomach or intestine to be damaged or, in very rare cases, perforated during the procedure. This can lead to bleeding and infection, which may require treatment with medicines or surgery.

The chance of complications depends on the exact type of procedure you are having and other factors such as your general health. You should ask your doctor to explain how any risks apply to you.

**To find out more about having gastroscopy in a Spire Healthcare hospital, please contact your local Spire hospital.**



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