



A guide to...

Having a Gastroscopy and Colonoscopy

Patient Information

How to contact us

Booking and interpreting queries – Please call the number on your appointment letter

Clinical queries – Hemel Hempstead 01442 287968 / Watford 01923 436095

Any other query – Please call Hemel Hempstead 01442 287681 / Watford 01923 217530

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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What is a Gastroscopy and Colonoscopy (OGD)?

A Gastroscopy is an investigation that allows us to look directly at your gullet (oesophagus), stomach and the upper part of the intestine. A thin flexible tube, called an endoscope is passed through your mouth, into your stomach. Tissue samples can be taken for further analysis. The test takes approximately five to ten minutes to complete.

A colonoscopy is an investigation that allows us to look directly at your colon. A flexible camera is passed into your back passage and around your colon. The camera allows the endoscopist to look for any abnormalities that may be present. If necessary, small tissue samples (biopsies) can be taken during the examination for laboratory analysis. Polyps, which are abnormal growths of tissue from the lining of the bowel wall, can also be removed. Risks and benefits for both procedures are explained within your consent form (enclosed with appointment letter).

Preparation

You are having two procedures on the same day; you need to ensure you follow the instructions carefully.

This investigation must be done on an empty stomach. You will need to **follow the bowel preparation instructions carefully** and not eat as instructed during this time. You may continue to **sip clear fluids only** up until two hours before your procedure time.

To allow a clear view, the colon must be completely free of waste material. You will have been sent a laxative solution to drink prior to your examination. **It is vital that you follow the instructions in the bowel preparation and take all the solution, otherwise, this procedure may need to be cancelled.**

Since you are having a gastroscopy on the same day as your colonoscopy, please remember to stop drinking two hours before your appointment time this includes water.

It is recommended that you do not travel abroad within two weeks of your procedure for safety reasons. This could invalidate your travel insurance. Please call us if you would like to discuss.

What will happen?

When you arrive, the nurse will explain the procedure and answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign a consent form giving us your permission to proceed with the test. You may need to have a cannula inserted into your arm to give medications.

Keeping you comfortable -

Three kinds of medicines are available to keep you comfortable.

1. For Gastroscopy you may opt for throat spray to numb the back of your throat and to keep you comfortable throughout the examination. The recovery time after throat spray is quicker than if you have sedation and you will be able to drive afterwards.
2. For Colonoscopy you may opt for Entonox which is commonly known as gas and air. This is an anaesthetic gas that works well as an effective pain relief. If you chose to have Entonox, you will be encouraged to rest for a short while after the test after which time you will be safe to drive.

3. Intravenous conscious sedation can be given for both tests, this is given through a small IV line placed in your arm or hand. This will make you feel relaxed but not asleep. With this type of sedation, it will be necessary for you to rest in the unit afterwards until assessed as fit for discharge. It is also essential that you arrange for a responsible person to escort you home after the test and stay with you for 24 hours. **Failure to make these arrangements may result in the investigation being cancelled.** Please note conscious sedation is not a general anaesthetic.

In the procedure room

The nurse will ask you some safety questions. You will then be asked to position yourself on your left side. You may be asked to remove any dentures and to bite down on a soft plastic mouthpiece. If you have a tongue piercing, you will be asked to remove it.

If you have sedation, you will be given oxygen via a sponge placed into your nostril. Once the throat spray or sedation has taken effect the examination will take place.

If you are taking iron tablets you will need to stop taking these for 5 days before your procedure. **If you are taking blood thinning tablets (warfarin, clopidogrel, ticagrelor, dabigatran, rivaroxaban, apixaban or edoxaban) please continue to take these unless you have been advised otherwise by a clinician prior to your test.** If you are taking diabetes medication you will receive an information leaflet and you may also wish to speak with your diabetes specialist nurse. **Please take all other medication as you would usually.** Please ensure you bring a list with you of all medications you are currently taking.

Standard colonoscopy

In one in every 2,000 cases a small hole in the colon can be caused (perforation) or bleeding can occur after a biopsy.

Colonoscopy with polyp removal

A bleed might occur in one out of every 150 cases and one in every 500 cases a perforation may occur.

Colonoscopy with endoscopic mucosal resection (large polyp removal)

A bleed might occur in 1 in 20 patients and a perforation in 1 in 150 patients.

If a complication does occur, observation in hospital is necessary and surgery may be needed. Very rarely a bleed can start any time up to two weeks after the test, please contact us if this occurs.

Afterwards

After the procedure the nurses will take your observations, the nurses will continue to assess until you are fit for discharge. For those patients who have opted for sedation the recovery time will be longer as more observation is required.

When will I get the results of the procedure?

You will be given a copy of the report before you leave the department and the doctor or nurse will talk to you at the end of the procedure to explain their findings. If you have had samples sent to the laboratory the results will be reviewed by the endoscopist and you will be contacted within two weeks if there is anything of concern.

If after the investigation you experience severe tummy pain or bleeding (more than an eggcup full), please attend your nearest acute Accident and Emergency department taking with you a copy of your Endoscopy report and this leaflet. Do not drive.

- Accident and Emergency at Watford on 01923 217 256
- Please note: there is NO Accident and Emergency at Hemel Hempstead or St Albans Hospitals.