



A guide to...

Having a Gastroscopy

Patient Information

How to contact us

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

Clinical queries – Watford 01923 436095

Any other query – 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?

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. The risks and benefits are explained on your consent form (enclosed with appointment letter).

Preparation

This investigation must be done on an empty stomach. You will need to stop eating six hours before your test. You may continue to sip clear fluids for a further four hours. **It is vital that you follow the instructions or your procedure will be cancelled.**

If you are taking Rivaroxaban, Edoxaban, Dabigatran or Apixaban please do not take these on the morning of your test. Please take all other blood thinning medication as you would usually would. If you are diabetic, please contact your specialist nurse for advice.

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

Two kinds of medicines are available to keep you comfortable;

1. Throat spray can be used to numb the back of your throat 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. Intravenous conscious sedation can be given to you 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. 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 in your nostril. Once the throat spray or sedation has taken effect the examination will take place.

Risks

Failure to follow the fasting instructions increases the risk that you may develop a chest infection after the procedure. A gastroscopy is a very safe procedure but rarely bleeding or a small hole in the gullet, stomach or small intestine can develop (perforation), the risk of this happening is less than one in every 5000 cases. Although a gastroscopy is a very sensitive test, no procedure is 100% accurate and there is a small chance that abnormalities can be missed. If you are worried about any of these risks, please speak to your doctor or a member of the team before you are due to have this procedure.

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.