

What is a Gastroscopy?

Gastroscopy involves the use of a flexible tube to examine the upper intestinal tract including the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. The procedure is commonly undertaken if your doctor suspects that you have an ulcer, inflammation or other abnormality of the oesophagus (the pipe which connects the throat to the stomach), stomach or duodenum.

How are you prepared?

You need to fast for **6 hours** before the procedure. While fasting, take all your regular medications with a sip of water. It is desirable that you are not taking any iron tablets, aspirin, clopidogrel or other blood thinners if possible.

Special Considerations

If you have serious heart or chest problems special precautions need to be taken to reduce any possible risk. You should therefore inform your doctor of any serious illness of this nature before your procedure. The precautions taken will usually include providing oxygen during the procedure and/or monitoring the heart and oxygen levels during the procedure.

What do we do?

An endoscope is a flexible tube about 9mm in diameter. It allows full colour inspection of the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. It also allows biopsies to be taken from the small bowel and other areas.

At the beginning of the procedure your throat will be sprayed with a local anaesthetic and you will be given a sedative by injection in a vein to make you more comfortable. The procedure will take between 5 and 15 minutes and you will be sleepy for about half an hour afterwards.

Is it safe and what are the risks?

Gastroscopy is usually simple and safe. It is unlikely to cause problems for patients unless they have serious heart or chest problems. Extremely rarely, individual patients may have a reaction to the sedation or damage to the oesophagus at the time of examination.

The gastroscope is a complex reusable instrument, which cannot go through a heat sterilisation process. However, after each use it is thoroughly cleaned and then disinfected, using a high level disinfectant. The hospital cleans and disinfects the gastroscope according to the standards set by the Gastroenterological Society of Australia. The possibility of infection being introduced during the procedure cannot be completely ruled out, but seems extremely rare. Death is a remote possibility with any interventional procedure. However, if you wish to have full details of all possible rare complications discussed before the procedure, you should inform your doctor.

What happens after the procedure?

The sedative pain-killer you are given before the procedure is very effective in reducing any discomfort. However, it may also affect your memory for some time afterwards. Even when the sedative appears to have worn off, you may find you are unable to recall details of your discussion with your doctor. For this reason a relative or friend should come with you if possible. **You must not drive, operate machinery or make major decisions for 12 hours after the gastroscopy.**

If after you have returned home you have any severe pain, bleeding, fever, or other symptoms that cause you concern, you should contact the Hospital, your General Practitioner or attend your nearest emergency department.

What happens when I arrive on the day?

At the hospital. Report to the Hollywood Hospital Gastroenterology Department at the time advised. Please bring any relevant test results or X-rays and your Medical Insurance and Medicare details.

You will be in the hospital for about 3 – 4 hours. It is unsafe to drive yourself home. **You must not drive or operate machinery or make major decisions for 12 hours after the gastroscopy.** The sedative painkiller you are given before the procedure is very effective in reducing any discomfort. However, it may also affect your memory for some time afterwards. Even when the sedative appears to have worn off, you may find you are unable to recall details of your discussion with the Gastroenterologist. For this reason, have a relative or friend come with you if possible.

If after you have returned home you have any severe pain, bleeding, fever, or other symptoms that cause you concern, you should contact the Hospital, your General Practitioner or attend your nearest emergency department.

In most instances health funds accept Riverview Endoscopy accounts for direct no-gap billing. If not, you will be given an invoice for the doctor's services. Most health funds require you to pay a hospital excess which must be paid on the day. If biopsies are taken you will also receive an account from the Pathologist. For most procedures an Anaesthetist is also present, where possible, this is usually also billed as a no-gap service direct to your health fund.

GASTROSCOPY PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Also applicable for **VARICEAL THERAPY, OESOPHAGEAL DILATATION or PEG insertion**

Please read carefully

You must fast for 6 hours before the test. When fasting have nothing to eat or drink. However, you may take medications with a sip of water.

Morning Appointments

Have nothing to eat or drink after midnight.

Afternoon Appointments

Have nothing to eat or drink after 7 am.