

MBBS (Hons) Syd. MMED (Clin Epi) FRACS  
Colorectal and General Surgeon - Provider No. 065326DK

## GASTROSCOPY

### What is gastroscopy?

Gastroscopy is an examination of the upper gastrointestinal tract (oesophagus, stomach, and duodenum) with a special long flexible camera. The camera is inserted via the mouth.

### Will any procedures take place during the gastroscopy?

We can take biopsies of any abnormality seen at the gastroscopy.

### Am I asleep?

The procedure requires anaesthesia (either full sedation or general anaesthesia). This will be administered by a qualified anaesthetist (not a sedationist). You will not be aware of any discomfort.

### Do I need any special preparation?

No. You just need to have nothing to eat or drink for 6 hours.

### Will I need to stop or alter any medications?

It is vitally important to discuss your medications with your doctors. Blood thinning medications such as Plavix or Warfarin will need to be ceased. Other medications may require alteration as well. You will be given clear instructions.

### What happens on the day of the procedure?

You will be notified by the hospital what time to fast from and what time to come to the hospital. You will be in hospital for approximately 6 hours. You will be admitted, undressed and then the procedure will take place in the operating theatre. After this you will go to recovery where you will wake up fully.

### What happens after the gastroscopy?

You will be seen by Dr Pathma-Nathan before you go home and your results will be given to you. You will need to have someone to pick you up from the hospital. You cannot go home alone or be alone for the night after the procedure. Please ensure that you have adequate care provisions for this.

### When can I eat and drink?

You can eat immediately and will be fed in hospital. You may be advised on a specific diet on the day if necessary. Avoid alcohol for 24hrs.

### When can I drive?

You can drive the next day unless you have been given medications that specify you cannot. Page

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## **When can I return to work?**

You can work the next day unless advised otherwise or have had an added procedure. You will be told when you can return to work.

## **What are the complications?**

Gastroscopy is very safe with a low complication rate.

There may be complications related to the anaesthetic drugs or where the injections were given. There may be problems related to your heart or breathing. These are more common if you have an underlying medical problem.

Specifically to the gastroscopy there are risks of bleeding especially if a polypectomy or biopsy is performed. The bleeding may occur up to several days after the procedure. Please return to hospital if this occurs.

The most serious complication is perforation of the gastrointestinal tract. This is very rare but is a life-threatening problem. Surgery is not always required but is often required.

Much care is taken to avoid this complication. It is more common if there is an underlying disease process or if a polypectomy or biopsy is performed. There will be severe abdominal or chest pain and fever. If you are feeling unwell after the procedure, especially with pain then please contact Dr Pathma-Nathan or the hospital urgently. You will be given contact details.

## **What are the alternatives?**

There are alternatives to gastroscopy but they are not as good. Imaging techniques such as barium studies and CT scans are used but are reserved for patients unable to have gastroscopy for medical reasons.