

If you chose to have sedation for your gastroscopy you must have someone to accompany you home and you will not be able to drive until the following day.

What is Gastroscopy?

Gastroscopy is an endoscopic procedure that allows your doctor to examine the inside lining of your oesophagus (food tube), stomach and duodenum (first part of your small intestine). This involves passing a very small flexible tube (gastroscope) with a video camera on the end that projects images through a computer onto a television screen.

Why is Gastroscopy done?

Gastroscopy can help with the diagnosis of many problems that affect the gastrointestinal tract, such as bleeding, heartburn, reflux of stomach acid into oesophagus, nausea, abdominal pain and swallowing difficulties. In many cases, disorders can be treated during the gastroscopy procedure.

What are the possible complications?

Gastroscopy is a safe procedure and the majority of people will have no problems. Complications are very rare. The two main risks are excessive bleeding from the biopsy site where a polyp has been removed, or perforation (tear) of the stomach lining.

Other possible risks include a very rare reaction to the sedatives used and complications from heart or lung diseases. Major complications, such as perforation (a tear that might require surgery for repair) are very uncommon. It is important to recognise early signs of any possible complications.

In the unlikely event you have trouble swallowing or having increasing throat, chest or abdominal pain you need to tell your doctor promptly.

What preparation is required?

Fasting for gastroscopy

You will be required to **fast for at least 6 hours before the procedure** to avoid aspiration during the procedure. You can drink small amounts of water until 2 hours before the procedure and may take your usual medications with a sip of water.

Possible medication adjustments

It is important to discuss with your doctor any health problems you have had. Some health problems may affect the gastroscopy, sedation or recovery. Tell your doctor:

- about any history of diabetes, heart problems or artificial heart valves.
- all of the medicines you are taking and
- any allergies you may have.

You should be able to continue taking most of your normal medicines. **If you are taking blood thinners, insulin/diabetic medicines, or iron tablets** it is important that you phone the Gastroenterology Department at least seven days before your appointment as you may need to stop or adjust the medicine dosage for the gastroscopy.

What can be expected during gastroscopy?

Your throat will be sprayed with a local anaesthetic, and a mouth guard is placed between your teeth to protect your teeth and the endoscope.

Diagnostic gastroscopy can be performed without sedation. This means you can immediately continue your usual activities including working or

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driving yourself home. If you prefer sedation to help you relax during your gastroscopy **you must have someone that can drive you home**. Sedation works well for most people, even if they are anxious. It is not a general anaesthetic and you may still have some awareness. The sedation is given through a small needle (cannula) inserted into your vein.

If you need a therapeutic procedure, for example dilation, you will need to be given sedation.

You be positioned on your left side and you may be given sedation. The doctor will then insert the gastroscopy into your mouth and slowly guide it down the oesophagus and into the stomach. During the procedure, the doctor examines the lining of the oesophagus, duodenum and upper part of small intestine for abnormalities. Tissue samples (biopsies) may be taken.

What happens after gastroscopy?

After the test you will be observed in the endoscopy area until most of the effects of medications have worn off. Your throat may be a little sore for a while and you may also feel bloated right after the procedure because of the air introduced into your stomach during the test.

You will be able to restart your normal diet after you leave the clinic unless you have been told otherwise. People who have had sedation usually do not remember any discomfort experienced during the procedure and may feel tired for the rest of the day.

Arrangement to get home after the test

If you received sedation, **please arrange to have a responsible adult to accompany you home**, due to the effect the sedation may have on your judgment and reflexes for the rest of the day. **You will not be allowed to drive** and you should not make important decisions or operate machinery for the rest of the day even though you may not feel tired.

If you live on your own, please also arrange for a responsible adult to stay overnight with you.

If you have any questions that have not been answered please discuss them with the endoscopy nurse or your doctor before the examination begins.

Notes

Contact us

Gastroenterology Department

Level 6, Clinical Support Block
Wellington Regional Hospital
Phone: (04) 385 5999 Extension 6223

Appointment enquiries:

Phone: (04) 385 5999 extension 5269
Hours: 8am-4.30pm, Monday to Friday

Wellington Regional Hospital

Emergency Department or the

Gastroenterology Consultant on call

Phone: (04) 385 5999

Interventional Recovery Ward, Radiology Department

Hours: 7.30am-6pm, Monday to Friday
Nurse Enquiries

Phone: (04) 385 5999 Extension 80272

Admission Enquiries

Phone: (04) 806 0261

On call Medical Registrar

Hours: 24 hours / 7 days a week
Phone: (04) 385 5999