Gastroscopy

Endoscopy Department
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
What is an Gastroscopy?

Gastroscopy is performed to help find the cause for your symptoms such as: persistent upper abdominal pain, vomiting, indigestion, anaemia and difficulty in swallowing.

The investigation allows the Endoscopist to look at the lining of the oesophagus (gullet), the stomach and the duodenum (the first part of the small intestine) using a flexible endoscope. An endoscope is a long flexible tube about the size of your little finger, with a bright light at the end. Images are seen on a television screen.

- Biopsy: During the procedure tissue (biopsy) samples of the lining of your upper digestive tract may be taken. This is a painless procedure and will not cause any discomfort.

About your appointment:
Please be aware that on occasions there can be a slight delay between your nurse admission and the time you have your procedure. The Endoscopy unit often has to deal with emergency cases which may cause delays to your appointment time. The length of time you will be here will vary but may be anything from two to four hours. The person accompanying you is welcome to stay in our waiting area or alternatively we can telephone them when you are ready to be collected. Please note car parking charges are in force. Ask your admitting nurse if you require any further information during your admission check.

Property:
Please do not bring valuables to the hospital. We cannot accept any responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property during your time in the unit.

Risks, benefits and alternatives

What are the benefits?
This procedure is to find the possible cause for your symptoms or condition or to exclude serious conditions such as cancer.
- Some conditions can be treated during the procedure
- Dependent on the results of this procedure, further tests or treatment may be recommended

Are there any risks?
As with every medical procedure, there are some risks involved. Please be reassured that your doctor would only have recommended a Gastroscopy if the benefit to you from the procedure clearly outweighs these small risks. Any complications could mean that you need to stay in hospital for treatment.

- Diagnostic gastroscopy procedures carry a very small risk (one in 10,000 cases of haemorrhage (bleeding) or perforation (tear) of the gut following which surgery may be necessary.
Therapeutic gastroscopy procedures carry a very small risk (one in 1,000 cases of haemorrhage (bleeding) or perforation (tear) of the gut following which surgery may be necessary.

- Bleeding may occur following treatment or, very rarely after a biopsy sample is taken. This is usually treated by applying heat to the bleeding point. (cautery)
- Reaction to any sedation or painkillers used. This can be resolved by the use of other drugs.
- Damages: to dental bridgework, loose or crowned teeth.

Severe complications are rare, but may require emergency surgery, blood transfusion or, in extremely rare circumstances, result in death.

Are there any alternatives to a Gastroscopy?
A barium meal or barium swallow is a possible alternative test. However, these tests provide pictures of your gullet, stomach and duodenum but do not allow samples to be taken; therefore, you may still need to have a Gastroscopy.

Preparation for procedure

What preparation is required?
- If you are a Diabetic taking medication or insulin please follow the advice that is attached to your appointment letter.
- If you are taking any medication to thin your blood please follow the advice that is attached to your appointment letter.
- To allow a clear view during the procedure the stomach must be empty. It is important that you do not have anything to eat for at least 6 hours prior to your appointment time.
- You may have **sips of water only** up to 2 hours prior to your procedure.
- If you are having sedation you must be accompanied by a responsible adult to take you home after the procedure.
- Please bring a list of any current medication and any inhaler or angina sprays that you use.

Photographs
We do, sometimes, take photographs during the procedure; these will be kept in your medical records.

Training
The training of doctors and other health professionals is essential to the continuation of the NHS, and improving the quality of care. Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital’s Endoscopy Units are both training units and sometimes deliver National training courses. All trainees are experienced doctors or nurses and the procedure is performed under the direct supervision of an expert consultant or nurse trainer. The trainer is there to ensure your safety and comfort.

You can however, decline to be involved in the formal training of medical and other students; please inform the nursing staff on admission, this will not affect your care and treatment.

Pregnant
Please inform the unit prior to your appointment if you are pregnant.
What happens when you arrive at hospital?

After admission by reception staff a member of the nursing team will prepare you for your procedure. You will be asked some questions, including your medical history. Nurses are aware that you may be worried and anxious so do not be afraid to ask any questions.

Consent

The nurse will explain the procedure to you and discuss any potential risks. You will have the opportunity to ask any further questions.

You will be asked to sign the consent form confirming that you understand and agree to go ahead with the procedure. You can change your mind about having the procedure at any time.

The procedure

What should I expect during the procedure?

- You will be collected and taken into the procedure room where the Endoscopist and the nurses will introduce themselves and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions.

- You may have your throat sprayed with a local anaesthetic before the procedure begins, however if you are feeling at all anxious you may have a sedative.

- If you choose to have sedation the Endoscopist / specialist nurse will place a small needle into a vein. Sedation will be given through this needle to help you relax, but you will not be completely asleep (this is not a general anaesthetic).

- You will be asked to lie in a comfortable position on your left side.

- If you choose sedation you will be given oxygen through small tubes into your nostril.

- In order to monitor your heart rate and breathing the nurse looking after you will clip a probe onto one of your fingers.

- If you have any dentures, you will need to remove them at this point. Any remaining teeth will be protected by a small plastic mouth guard which will be inserted immediately before the examination commences.

- The Endoscopist will introduce the gastroscope gently into your mouth, down your gullet into your stomach. You may gag slightly, this is quite normal and will not interfere with your breathing or swallowing.

- Your stomach will be gently inflated with air to expand it so that the lining can be seen.
clearly which will make you burp and belch a little. Most of the air is taken out as the endoscope is removed.

- Any saliva you produce will be removed with a small suction tube, similar to that used at the dentist.
- A nurse will be with you throughout your procedure giving you guidance and support. You may also choose to hold the hand of the nurse.
- This procedure may take 10-15 minutes.

**After the procedure**

Once completed, the nurse caring for you during your procedure will take you to the recovery area where you will rest until fully recovered. Maintaining the privacy and dignity of our patients is important to us. The recovery area is divided into separate areas for male and female patients.

If you have had sedation you will be monitored until you are discharged home. You will be allowed to rest for as long as necessary. If you have chosen throat spray only your stay in the recovery area will be shorter.

**Discharge arrangements?**

**What happens when I am ready for discharge?**

The nursing staff looking after you will speak with you prior to discharge. A report of the examination will be given to yourself and a copy sent to your GP.

If you have had sedation this can sometimes make you forgetful so please have someone with you at this discussion.

An aftercare sheet will be given to you prior to leaving the unit which will contain all relevant information. Biopsy results will take a number of weeks to be available.

The numbing effect of the throat spray may last for one hour. After this period of time and when the numbness has worn off, you will be able to eat and drink normally.

**Please remember** Sedation may affect your judgment and reflexes for the rest of the day, therefore it is important that you have a responsible adult to take you home following the examination and remain with you for the next 12 hours. You must not drive a vehicle, drink
alcohol, operate any machinery and sign any important or legal documents for 24 hours following your examination.

Contact details for more information

If you are worried or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the hospital where you have been offered your appointment. Endoscopy units

- Royal Shrewsbury Hospital  Tel: 01743 261064 / 492395
- Princess Royal Hospital, Telford  Tel: 01952 565700 / 565701

Further information is available from:

- Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)
  PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns. They can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS is a confidential service.
  Royal Shrewsbury Hospital  Tel: 01743 261000 Ext 1691
  Princess Royal Hospital, Telford  Tel: 01952 641222 Ext 4382

Other sources of Information

- CORE - Digestive Disorders foundation
  Provides information leaflets on a wide range of digestive disorders. For patient information leaflets, send a stamped addressed envelope stating any information you require to the following address:
  Address: CORE, 3 St Andrews Place
            LONDON, NW1 4LB
  Website:  www.corecharity.org.uk

- Patient UK
  Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to National support/self help groups and a directory of UK health websites.
  Website:  www.patient.co.uk
Disclaimer

- This leaflet is provided for your information only. It must not be used as a substitute for professional medical care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. Always check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. This leaflet aims to direct you to quality websites: these are correct and active at the time of production. The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is not responsible or liable, directly or indirectly, for ANY form of damages whatsoever resulting from the use (or misuse) of information contained in this leaflet or found on web pages linked to by this leaflet.

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

Information Produced by: Endoscopy Unit
Due for Next Review on: January 2019
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