

Gastroscopy

What is a Gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy is the examination of your esophagus, stomach and duodenum (first part of the small bowel) using a gastroscope. A gastroscope is a long, thin flexible tube with a light at the end that is connected to a video monitor. The tube is inserted into your mouth and is directed into your esophagus and then passed through the stomach into the upper small bowel.

Will there be any discomfort? Is any anesthetic needed?

The procedure can be uncomfortable. To make it more comfortable, sedation will be given by an anesthesiologist. This sedation is administered via an intravenous. A combination of a sedative and an anesthetic is usually used. Your throat may or may not be sprayed with a topical anesthetic or numbing agent before the scope is inserted.

If you prefer, this procedure can be done without sedation. If done without sedation, you may experience some coughing, gagging, pressure and bloating during the procedure.

Your throat may feel sore after the procedure. You may have some cramping or bloating due to the air being inflated into the stomach during the procedure. These symptoms usually resolve within hours.

What are the potential complications of Gastroscopy?

Gastroscopy is considered to be a relatively safe procedure and serious complications are rare. These include bleeding, perforation (injury to the gastrointestinal tract wall), adverse reaction to anesthetic, aspiration of stomach contents into the lungs, etc. You will also find this information in the sheets provided to you by your specialist. If you have any additional questions, you will have an opportunity to ask them pre-procedure.

How do I prepare for the Gastroscopy?

Your stomach must be completely empty for the procedure. You will be provided with an instruction sheet, **“Preparing for Your Endoscopy Procedure”**. Please read and follow these instructions carefully.

It is important that you follow these recommendations carefully, since your procedure may be delayed or cancelled if you do not. After the procedure, the nurses looking after you will let you know when you can have anything to eat or drink.

You will receive several documents from your specialist in advance that you will need to review and/or fill in. Please make sure you provide as much information as possible on your **RVH Anesthetic Questionnaire** and **Pre-Surgery Medication Review**. It is important that your medication list is accurate. You can ask your pharmacist to help, if needed. You can also bring your medications with you to show to the admitting nurse.



What if the doctor finds something during the procedure?

Your doctor may take a biopsy or perform another intervention during the procedure. You will be informed of what was done. The pathology results usually take a few days to come back and your specialist will contact you about the findings, if appropriate. A copy of the endoscopy procedure report and the pathology report will be sent to the referring doctor and your family physician.

What happens in the hospital when I arrive for my Gastroscopy?

You will be asked to arrive at the hospital 1.5 hours before your scheduled appointment time. When you arrive, you will register with a clerk at the Central Registration on the second floor.

You will be admitted into the Endo Fast Track area. A nurse will review your completed paper work with you and take your medical history.

When the endoscopist is ready to perform your procedure, a nurse will take you to the procedure room. Please be aware that, although we do our very best to follow the schedule and do all procedures on time, there is always an element of unpredictability where medical procedures are concerned and you may have to wait longer than expected for your turn.

Following the procedure you will be transferred back to Endo Fast Track on a stretcher. This is where you will recover from your procedure.

You will have an opportunity to speak to your specialist after the procedure (before discharge) or an office follow-up appointment will be made to review the findings.

You will also receive a sheet with the findings and a post-procedure instruction sheet to take home with you.

Your responsible adult/driver must come to the Endo Fast Track area to pick you up. You must have someone to stay with you for the remainder of the day and the subsequent night. The person taking you home will be asked to sign a document acknowledging these recommendations. You are not allowed to drive until the following morning.

When should I call the doctor?

You should contact your doctor or go to the Emergency department if you experience any symptoms that may indicate complications, i.e. excessive bleeding, severe abdominal pain, vomiting, etc.

