
PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

UPPER GASTROINTESTINAL ENDOSCOPY

Explanation

This procedure can be commonly referred to as an endoscopy/gastroscopy or oesophagogastroduodenoscopy. It involves a thin and flexible telescopic camera being passed through the mouth and down to the stomach via the oesophagus (the pipe that connects the mouth to the stomach). In most cases the camera will be passed into the duodenum which is the small bowel that starts from the stomach. The advantages of this procedure are clear views are obtained and biopsies (small bits of tissue) or other minor procedures can be done at the time.

Comfort

To ensure that the procedure is made as comfortable as possible, an anaesthetist will administer some heavy but short acting sedation. Further details of this can be discussed with the anaesthetist on the day. In exceptional cases you may wish to have this done with no sedation at all. In countries such as the UK and Europe, this is considered acceptable and the choice remains with you. It may however be an uncomfortable experience without any anaesthesia.

It is important to stress that if sedation is chosen you should not drive or operate machinery for the following 24 hours.

Preparation

Preparation involves fasting (i.e. no food or drink) for 6 hours prior to the procedure. This will allow the stomach to be empty for examination and also make it safe to administer a sedative to you. If you have important daily medication to take, you may do so with a sip of water in the morning or afternoon.

The Procedure

The procedure itself is short and can take between 5 and 15 minutes to complete. It is a very safe procedure. All medical procedures carry risks however and in order for you to make an informed decision we discuss some potential associated risks. Minor ones include a sore throat for 24 hours. Major ones that have been associated are bleeding and bowel perforation but these are very rare. If you need to know more details of the procedure and risks please discuss this with the doctor, preferably before the day.

Post-procedure

In the event sedation is used, you should have an escort home. You must not drive home. The operation of machinery or driving is not recommended for the next 24 hours in case your judgement is impaired.