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### Information for patients undergoing gastroscopy

Your doctor wishes you to have an examination of your oesophagus, stomach and duodenum, so that he can have an understanding of any disease process or condition which is present. This will help him to understand and treat your symptoms. Preparation for the examination requires that you have an empty stomach. This means you must not take any food or drink or anything by mouth for several hours (usually overnight) before the examination. Solid foods should definitely be avoided 6 hours before the procedure, and liquids 4 hours before the procedure.

Because many patients are nervous and apprehensive about the examination, we usually administer "conscious sedation" – (see "Conscious Sedation – what you need to know"). We usually administer a small dose of Dormicum®, or similar sedative, into the vein. If you have had an unfavourable reaction to any drug, you should tell the examining physician before the medication is given. A local anaesthetic is given to numb the back of the throat and ease the passage of the instrument into the oesophagus.

The examination is conducted with the patient lying on his left side on a comfortable table in a partially darkened room. A long flexible tube is placed in the mouth and as the patient swallows, the doctor advances the tube into the oesophagus. A mouth guard is usually present for the patient to rest his teeth on and to protect the instrument. As the examination is conducted, the doctor pumps a small amount of air into the oesophagus and stomach and he may remove secretions by suction. As the instrument is passed beyond the stomach or small intestine, there is usually a tugging sensation which many people find unpleasant, but this subsides when the instrument is withdrawn into the stomach. Tiny bits of tissue may be removed with the biopsy forceps for examination under the microscope. The patient does not feel this procedure.

There are certain risks to this procedure:

1. An occasional patient has some inflammation at the site of the injection. This usually settles in a few days.
2. Some patients may complain of a sore throat following the procedure. This usually settles down in a day or so. Should you continue to have a sore throat, fever, or swelling, please do not hesitate to contact your doctor.
3. There is a **very** small chance of damage to your oesophagus and stomach during the procedure.
4. Aspiration – that is inhalation of stomach content.
5. Bleeding after biopsy occurs extremely rarely.

After the examination is completed, the instrument is removed and you will be asked to rest in an adjoining room for an hour or so until the effects of the sedation have subsided. After this, you may resume your normal activities.

If you have any questions, please ask your doctor.

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