# What is Upper GI Endoscopy?

Your doctor has recommended that you have a medical procedure called upper GI endoscopy to evaluate or treat your condition. This brochure will help you understand how upper GI endoscopy can benefit you and what you can expect before, during, and after this procedure.

## What is Upper GI Endoscopy?

The term "endoscopy" refers to a special technique for looking inside a part of the body. "Upper GI" is the portion of the gastrointestinal tract, the digestive system, that includes the esophagus, the swallowing tube leading to the stomach, which is connected to the duodenum, the beginning of the small intestine. The esophagus carries food from the mouth for digestion in the stomach and duodenum.

Upper GI endoscopy is a procedure performed by a gastroenterologist, a well-trained subspecialist who uses the endoscope to diagnose and, in some cases, treat problems of the upper digestive system.

The endoscope is a long, thin, flexible tube with a tiny video camera and light on the end. By adjusting the various controls on the endoscope, the gastroenterologist can safely guide the instrument to carefully examine the inside lining of the upper digestive system. The high quality picture from the endoscope is shown on a TV monitor; it gives a clear, detailed view. In many cases, upper GI endoscopy is a more precise examination than X-ray studies. Upper GI endoscopy can be helpful in the evaluation or diagnosis of various problems, including difficult or painful swallowing, pain in the stomach or abdomen, and bleeding, ulcers, and tumors.

## How Do I Prepare for the Procedure?

Regardless of the reason upper GI endoscopy has been recommended for you, there are important steps you can take to prepare for and participate in the procedure. First, be sure to give your doctor a complete list of all the medicines you are taking and any allergies you have to drugs or other substances.

Your medical team will also want to know if you have heart, lung, or other medical conditions that may need special attention before, during, or after upper GI endoscopy. You will be given instructions in advance that will outline what you should and should not do in preparation for the upper GI endoscopy. Be sure to read and follow these instructions.

One very important step in preparing for upper GI endoscopy is that you should not eat or drink within eight to ten hours of your procedure. Food in the stomach will block the view through the endoscope, and it could cause vomiting.

Upper GI endoscopy can be done in either a hospital or outpatient office. You'll be asked to sign a form that verifies that you consent to having the procedure and that you understand what is involved.

## What Can You Expect During an Upper GI Endoscopy?

During the procedure, everything will be done to help you be as comfortable as possible. Your blood pressure, pulse, and the oxygen level in your blood will be carefully monitored. Your doctor may give you a sedative medication; the drug will make you relaxed and drowsy, but you will remain awake enough to cooperate.

You may also have your throat sprayed or be asked to gargle with a local anesthetic to help keep you comfortable as the endoscope is passed. A supportive mouthpiece will be placed to help you keep your mouth open during the endoscopy. Once you are fully prepared, your doctor will gently maneuver the endoscope into position.

As the endoscope is slowly and carefully inserted, air is introduced through it to help your doctor see better. During the procedure, you should feel no pain and it will not interfere with your breathing.

Your doctor will use the endoscope to look closely for any problems that may require evaluation, diagnosis, or treatment.

In some cases, it may be necessary to take a sample of tissue, called a biopsy, for later examination under the microscope. This, too, is a painless procedure. In other cases, this endoscope can be used to treat a problem such as active bleeding from an ulcer.

### What are the Possible Complications From an Upper GI Endoscopy?

Years of experience have proved that upper GI endoscopy is a safe procedure. Typically, it takes only 15-20 minutes to perform.

Complications rarely occur. These include perforation - a puncture of the intestinal wall, which could require surgical repair, and bleeding, which could require transfusion. Again, these complications are unlikely. Be sure to discuss any specific concerns you may have with your doctor.

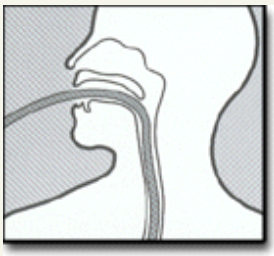
When your endoscopy is completed you'll be cared for in a recovery area until most of the effects of the medication have worn off. Your doctor will inform you about the results of the procedure and provide any additional information you need to know.

### What Can I Expect After My Upper GI Endoscopy?

You will be given instructions regarding how soon you can eat and drink, plus other guidelines for resuming your normal activity. Occasionally, minor problems may persist, such as mild sore throat, bloating, or cramping; these should disappear in 24 hours or less.

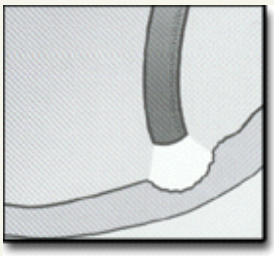
By the time you're ready to go home, you'll feel stronger and more alert. Nevertheless, you should plan on resting for the remainder of the day. This means not driving, so you'll need to have a family member or friend take you home. In a few days, you will hear from your doctor with additional information such as results of the biopsy, or you may have questions you want to ask the doctor directly.

## How Endoscopy Works

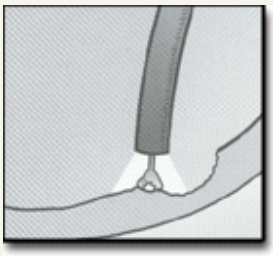


The endoscopy is inserted in your mouth and gently edged down your esophagus.

The endoscope will be inserted until it reaches your stomach.



Once in the stomach, your doctor will look closely for any problems areas.



If anything suspicious is found, your doctor will take a sample for biopsy.

### Additional Text

Upper GI Endoscopy is a proven technique – An effective way to help you maintain your digestive health!

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- If anything suspicious is found, your doctor will take a sample for biopsy.