

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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GASTROSCOPY

A patient's guide



Please note:

- The time on your appointment letter is **the time you need to arrive** at the Day Treatment Centre and not the time you will have your procedure.
- **You may have to wait for several hours** from arrival to the start of your procedure. Please arrive prepared for this and it may be a good idea to bring some reading material.
- **Please inform the department** as soon as possible if:
 - you need a **translator or interpreter**.
 - you take **blood thinners or medication for diabetes**.
- Let the Nurse/Doctor know if you have a **pacemaker, implantable defibrillator, artificial hips or any other metal implant**.
- Let the endoscopy nurses know as soon as possible if you are **not able to find someone to take you home** after the procedure.

Notes

After you go home

If you have any persistent abdominal pain, bleeding from your back passage or fever in the period up to 48 hours after your gastroscopy please contact the endoscopy unit between 8:30 and 17:30, Monday – Friday. Outside these times contact your GP or go to your nearest Emergency department - **please take a copy of your endoscopy report with you.**

IF YOU ARE HAVING A COLONOSCOPY APPOINTMENT AT THE SAME TIME, YOU NEED TO FOLLOW THE BOWEL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS BUT YOU NEED TO STOP DRINKING CLEAR FLUIDS 2 HOURS BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT TIME.

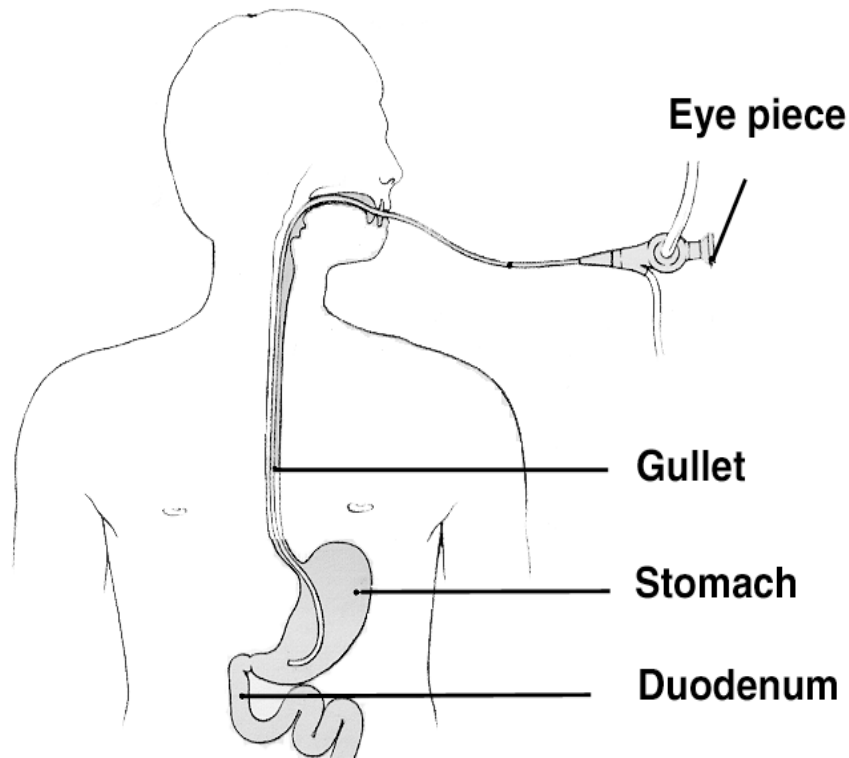
Please contact the Booking Services team on **0207 288 3822** if this appointment time is not convenient for you or if you are unable to keep your appointment, you can also email whh-tr.endoscopy@nhs.net

If you have a question about your procedure or medications, please contact the hospital switchboard on **0207 272 3070** and ask for **bleep number 2711** from Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:30. Alternatively you can contact **0207 288 3811/3812**.

Please leave all valuables at home. The hospital cannot accept responsibility for these items and lockers are not available.

What is a gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy, more commonly known as an endoscopy is a camera test to have a look at the oesophagus (the tube that carries food from your mouth to your stomach), the stomach and the duodenum (first part of your small bowel). The instrument used is called a gastroscope with the diameter of a little finger. The scope has a camera and light at the end and is introduced through the mouth.



The gastroscopy normally takes around 7 minutes. The procedure is a bit uncomfortable but is not painful. If you wish you could have sedation or throat spray (local anaesthetic).

What happens during the examination?

A member of the team will bring you to a side room where the Endoscopist will explain the procedure and ask you to sign the consent form; here you can ask all the questions that you may have.

If you have sedation, the nurses will insert a cannula into your arm. If you opt for the throat spray the nurses will give it to you just before the procedure.

After all checks are done, you will be asked to lie on your left side and the nurse will ask you to bite a small mouthguard which is a protective device for the mouth that covers the teeth and gums to prevent injury to the teeth.

Carbon dioxide or air will be introduced into your stomach to help the endoscopist see - you may feel a bit bloated during the procedure.

Any secretions/saliva produced during the examination will be removed using a suction tube in the mouth.

Please note: Whittington Health is a teaching hospital and sometimes a medical/nursing student can be asked to observe your procedure.

What happens when I arrive in the Endoscopy Unit?

On the day of the procedure, when you arrive at the unit, you will be asked to complete a short form with personal details and information regarding your current medications. Please bring any medications that you are currently taking with you, or an up-to-date copy of your prescription. If you are unable to complete the form yourself, someone will help you.

You will be seen by a nurse who will ask you a few questions about your medical history. This is to confirm that you are fit enough to undergo the gastroscopy examination. The nurse will record your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels. If you are diabetic, your blood glucose level will also be checked.

The nurse will also ask you about your arrangements for getting home after your gastroscopy. **If you have decided to have a sedative, you must be accompanied home.**

You will be escorted to a designated waiting area where you will wait until the time for your procedure.

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Intravenous Sedation

A sedative injection and a painkiller will be injected into a vein. The sedation will make you feel slightly drowsy and relaxed but will not put you to sleep. You may be aware of what is going on around you and will be able to follow simple instructions during the examination. We will monitor your vital signs throughout the examination.

If you decide to have the sedation, you must have someone to take you home. If you are having difficulties finding an escort, inform one of the endoscopy nurses using the telephone numbers provided.

Throat Spray

A local anaesthetic drug (xylocaine) is sprayed onto the back of the throat to make it numb. It has a very bitter taste but works quickly. The spray allows the camera to pass through your throat without you feeling it.

The benefit of having the spray is that you are fully conscious and can go home unaccompanied soon after the examination. The spray will numb your throat for 45 minutes and during that time you will not be able to eat or drink anything.

Why do I need a gastroscopy?

You have been advised to have a gastroscopy to try and find the cause of your symptoms.

Reasons for requesting a gastroscopy can include:

- Indigestion
- Anaemia
- Weight loss
- Vomiting
- Swallowing difficulties

The gastroscopy is a safe examination and serious complications are extremely rare. You need to read this information carefully and weigh up the benefits against the risks of having the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form before your procedure is performed.

The main risks are:

- Small risk of perforation/ tear, if this happens you may require an operation to repair the tear.
- Small risk of bleeding.
- Dental damage or aspiration pneumonia occur rarely.
- Sedation can cause breathing problems in 1 to 200 patients, but such problems are normally short lived. You will be monitored during procedure.

What are the alternatives?

- Barium swallow: this is an x-ray examination of the upper GI tract, but it has its disadvantages. Biopsies cannot be taken, and the test requires radiation.

What happens before the gastroscopy?

You must not eat anything for at least 6 hours before your procedure; food can stop the endoscopist from getting a clear view inside your stomach. It also increases the risk of inhaling the contents of your stomach into your lungs and this can cause aspiration pneumonia. You will be able to have **a few sips of water up to 2 hours before** your test. If you do not follow these instructions your procedure will be cancelled.

DO NOT STOP ANY OF YOUR REGULAR MEDICATIONS BEFORE THE PROCEDURE UNLESS TOLD OTHERWISE BY THE ENDOSCOPY NURSE OR REFERRING DOCTOR.