



UMC Utrecht

# Gastroscopy

**Internal examination of the esophagus (gullet), stomach and duodenum (first part of the small intestines)**



# Introduction

You have an upcoming appointment for a gastroscopy. This is an internal examination of the esophagus (gullet), stomach and duodenum (first part of the small intestines). This leaflet provides important information about the procedures surrounding this examination and how you can prepare for this.

## Important

- You must fast for 6 hours before the examination. More information about this is provided on page 2.
- If you use anticoagulants, it is important that you read the information about this on page 2 thoroughly and that you consult with your treating doctor.
- This examination can take place “under sedation”. Your doctor will discuss this with you.
- Will you be receiving sedation? Then you may not go home without someone to accompany you. The person accompanying you can sit in the waiting room, but can not enter the department and can not be present during the examination.
- Are you sick or indisposed? Please inform us as soon as possible via telephone number 088 75 573 66.
- Please contact your doctor if you:
  - are allergic to certain medicines.
  - might be/are pregnant.
  - have a condition affecting your heart and/or lungs.

## Any questions?

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please call us on telephone number: 088 75 573 66. We can be contacted on working days between 8:00am and 5:00pm.

# Aim of the examination

During this examination, the doctor will examine the mucous membranes of the esophagus (gullet), stomach and duodenum (first part of the small intestines). If necessary, the doctor can collect small pieces of tissue (biopsies) for microscopic examination.

## **Duration of the examination**

The examination will take 5 to 15 minutes.

# Preparations

Your esophagus and stomach need to be empty for a gastroscopy. Therefore, you must fast before the examination. This means that you may not eat, drink or smoke for six hours prior to the examination.

The examination can not proceed if you have not fasted.

# Medication

If you are taking medication, you may take this up to 3 hours before the examination with a sip of water. You may also be able to postpone taking your medication until after the examination. Discuss this with your doctor.

## **Anticoagulants**

Do you use anticoagulants? In some cases you will have to stop taking the anticoagulants temporarily before the gastroscopy. Always discuss this with the doctor who has requested the gastroscopy.

## **Diabetes mellitus**

Do you have Diabetes Mellitus and are you using insulin? Adjust the morning dose of insulin as discussed with your doctor.

If you are using tablets, then you may take your normal dose on the day before the examination.

On the day of the examination:

- No medication prior to the examination.
- After the examination:
  - if you take medication once daily, you can start taking the medication with the first meal after the procedure.
  - If you take medication 2, 3 or 4 times daily: resume with the usual dose at the next meal.

## Throat anesthetic and/or sedation

### **Throat anesthetic**

You can opt for a throat anesthetic. Your throat will be numbed with a spray. The spray ensures that you do not gag as much when the gastrocope is inserted.

### **Sedation**

You can receive sedation during the gastroscopy. This is also referred to as a sedative or sleep-inducing drug.

Sedation is not the same as an anesthetic. The sedation ensures that you feel sleepy during the examination. This reduces any anxiety that you may feel. However, the use of sedation slightly increases the risk of complications.

The sedative will be administered via an IV needle in your arm. If you know from previous experience that there have been problems with the insertion of an IV, please let us know about this in a timely manner.

# During the examination

## **The start of the gastroscopy**

The nurse will collect you from the waiting room and will take you to the preparation room. Here you will lie down on a bed and we will check your details with you. If you will be receiving a sedative, we will insert an IV needle. An endoscopy nurse will collect you and take you to the examination room. The doctor will ask you a number of questions, this is called a "time-out".

If you are receiving sedation, then we will measure your blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen levels.

You will be given something to drink that counteracts foaming in the stomach. And if you wish, you will receive the throat anesthetic.

We will ask you to remove any loose dental elements and to remove your glasses. A protective bite ring will be placed in the mouth during the examination.

## **The insertion of the gastroscope**

During the examination, you will lie on your left side on the examination bed. The nurse will place the bite ring between your teeth, to protect both your teeth and the gastroscope (a thin, flexible camera tube). The doctor will insert the gastroscope through the ring into your throat and will ask you to swallow.

## **Air**

You can continue to breathe in and out through your nose or mouth during the insertion and the rest of the examination. There will be enough room left in your throat for you to breathe normally. Air will be blown in during the examination, so that we can take a good look at the esophagus, stomach and duodenum. You may need to burp as a result of this air.

## **Biopsy**

If the doctor thinks that it is necessary, a small piece of tissue (a biopsy) will be removed for further investigation. This is not painful. Once the examination has been completed, the doctor will remove the gastroscope.

# After the examination

Once the examination has been completed, the nurse will take you to the recovery room. If you have received sedation, you will have to stay here for up to an hour. Once you are fully awake, you will be given something to eat and drink. After the examination, we will call the person accompanying you to inform them about the time at which you can be collected. You may not leave the department without someone to accompany you.

If you have not received sedation, then you can leave the department as soon as you have received all the paperwork. If you have had a throat anesthetic, then you must wait one hour before eating and drinking. You will receive a discharge letter. This contains information about what was observed/performed during the examination and what you should do if complications occur.

## **Participating in traffic and assistance after sedation**

You may not drive a vehicle (car, motorcycle, moped, bicycle) for the rest of the day after receiving sedation. Even if you are going home in a taxi or by public transport, then you still need to have a family member or acquaintance with you.

If you do not have anyone to accompany you to your home, then you can not receive sedation. In that case, we suggest that you consult with the doctor who has requested the procedure, to discuss a solution.

## **Possible complications**

A gastroscopy is a safe examination. In rare cases, complications can occur:

- Your throat may continue to feel tender for a few days after the gastroscopy.
- Aspiration can cause the contents of the stomach to end up in the lungs. Occasionally, this can result in an infection.
- Occasionally, breathing difficulties or heart function abnormalities can occur as a result of the sedation.

## **When to contact us**

You must contact us if you experience severe abdominal pain, fever or severe blood loss. You can contact the Endoscopy department on working days between 8:00am and 5:00pm via 088 75 573 66. After hours, you can contact the Gastro-enterology department via 088 75 562 22.

# Notes

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Division of Internal Medicine and Dermatology

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