

CENTRAL MELBOURNE GASTROENTEROLOGY

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GASTROSCOPY – PATIENT INFORMATION

What is a gastroscopy and how is it performed?

Gastroscopy (or upper gastrointestinal endoscopy) is a procedure to inspect the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum (first part of the small bowel) using a thin, flexible tube with a camera.

An empty stomach is essential for a safe examination, so you should have nothing to eat or drink for six hours before the examination. You may have your normal medications with a small sip of water. However, if you are diabetic, you will need to discuss your medications with your doctor in advance.

An intravenous sedative is given prior to the procedure so that you will be sleepy during the examination. You may be given a local anaesthetic spray to numb the throat. The instrument is passed via the mouth and advanced along the oesophagus, stomach and into the duodenum. Biopsies (tissue samples) may be taken during the procedure. The test usually takes between 5 and 20 minutes. You will not be in any pain or discomfort and will be able to breathe normally throughout.

What are the risks of gastroscopy?

Any medical procedure carries some risk, however gastroscopy is usually a simple and safe procedure and complications are rare. Serious problems such as anaesthetic complications, bleeding or gut perforation (tear) occur in approximately 1:10,000 cases. **If you wish to have a more detailed discussion about potential risks, please ask your doctor prior to the procedure.**

What happens after the gastroscopy?

Following the gastroscopy, you will remain in the hospital recovery area until the effect of the medication wears off. You may experience slight discomfort or bloating and possibly a sore throat.

Because the sedation given may interfere with your judgement or ability to concentrate, you should not drive a motor vehicle, travel on public transport alone, operate dangerous machinery or sign important documents for the remainder of the day. It is necessary to arrange for a relative or friend to take you home from the hospital and stay with you.

If you develop severe abdominal or chest pain, fever, vomit blood or pass black bowel motions, you should contact your doctor immediately or go to the nearest hospital's Emergency Department.