



Having a gastroscopy

A guide for patients and their carers



Contents

Welcome to the integrated procedures unit.	3
Why do I need a gastroscopy?	3
What is the benefit of a gastroscopy?	3
Are there any alternatives to a gastroscopy?	4
What happens if I decide not to have a gastroscopy? . . .	4
Is gastroscopy safe?	4
Should I take my usual tablets or medicines?	4
Will I feel anything during the gastroscopy?	4
What must I do before my gastroscopy?	5
How long will I be in the hospital?	6
What happens before my gastroscopy?	6
What happens during the gastroscopy?	6
What happens after the gastroscopy?	6
When you go home	7

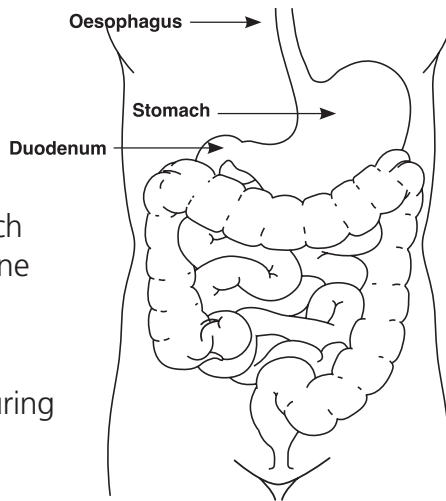
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Christie website

For more information about The Christie and our services, please visit **www.christie.nhs.uk** or visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford.

Welcome to the integrated procedures unit

Your doctor has recommended that you have a gastroscopy. This is a procedure using a special tube to look at the lining of your gullet (oesophagus), your stomach and first part of the intestine (duodenum).



We want to make you as comfortable as possible during your visit. We have written this booklet to answer the commonly asked questions about gastroscopy. If you have more questions, or if there is anything that you do not understand, please ask when you attend for the gastroscopy.

When you arrive at The Christie please report to the integrated procedures unit (IPU), department 2.

Why do I need a gastroscopy?

The procedure may help to find the cause of your symptoms or even to treat them. Samples (biopsies) may be taken during your gastroscopy to obtain exact information about any abnormality seen. This will help to plan the best treatment for you.

What is the benefit of a gastroscopy?

The main benefit of a gastroscopy is that it is a simple, quick test which is helpful in reaching a diagnosis. It can also be used as a way of delivering treatment.

Are there any alternatives to a gastroscopy?

An alternative to a gastroscopy could be a barium swallow or a barium meal X-ray. These tests are frequently less accurate than a gastroscopy. The doctor will discuss this with you.

What happens if I decide not to have a gastroscopy?

The symptoms may persist and it may be hard to reach a diagnosis.

Is gastroscopy safe?

It is a very safe procedure. The commonest side effect is a sore throat. Serious complications, such as bleeding or damage to the gullet are rare (less than 1 in 1,000 gastroscopies). The doctor will discuss these with you when you arrive at hospital. There is a slight risk to crowned teeth or bridgework.

Should I take my usual tablets or medicines?

Take your prescribed tablets as usual but:

- stop taking iron tablets 7 days before your test
- **if you take Warfarin, Clopidogrel or any other medication to thin your blood, please let the doctor or nurse know as soon as possible. Please phone 0161 918 2420**

Will I feel anything during the gastroscopy?

The procedure is performed using anaesthetic spray to numb your throat, with or without an injection into a vein to make you sleepy (sedation). Your doctor will discuss both options and help you decide which is best for you.

Anaesthetic spray

- allows you to stay awake, enabling you to talk to the doctor about the results immediately after the gastroscopy
- allows you to recover quickly
- allows you to go home without delay
- allows you to drive home after the procedure
- you will be aware of the procedure being performed.

Sedation (injection)

- may make you drowsy
- may make you unable to remember the procedure
- may make you less anxious
- you will take longer to recover if sedation is given
- you will not be able to drive home after sedation
- you will need an adult to accompany you when you go home after sedation
- for a morning procedure an adult must stay with you until early evening
- for an afternoon procedure an adult must stay with you overnight.

What must I do before my gastroscopy?

- Do **not** eat for at least 6 hours before your gastroscopy.
- You may have **clear** liquids up to 2 hours before your gastroscopy.
- Do take your tablets and medicines as usual on the morning of your gastroscopy.

How long will I be in the hospital?

Please allow for a 2 hour stay. We will do everything possible to keep your stay short. Patients not having sedation usually have a shorter stay.

What happens before my gastroscopy?

The doctor doing the gastroscopy will discuss the procedure with you. When you feel all your questions have been answered, the doctor will ask for your written consent to proceed.

What happens during the gastroscopy?

The doctor will discuss this with you before starting. If you have requested sedation, a small needle will be put in a vein in your hand or arm and oxygen will be given through a tube under your nose. If you are not having sedation, the doctor will apply the throat spray before the procedure begins.

A plastic mouth guard will be placed between your teeth and the gastroscopy tube passed into your mouth and down into the stomach. This may be a little uncomfortable but should not make it difficult to breathe. The test usually takes only a couple of minutes. Samples (biopsies) are sometimes taken from the oesophagus, stomach or duodenum during the procedure. This is not painful.

What happens after the gastroscopy?

- If you had no sedation you can go home when you are ready.
- If you had sedation you will be taken to the recovery area. You will be monitored for at least one hour until you are fully awake. You can go home after this with a responsible adult.
- If you need any follow up, we will send you an appointment through the post.

When you go home

If you had sedation for your gastroscopy you must not:

- travel home on public transport
- drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after the test
- be left alone to care for small children for 24 hours after the test
- sign legal documents for 24 hours
- drink alcohol for 24 hours
- return to work for 24 hours after the test.

Hot food and drinks are best avoided for the rest of the day if your throat is sore. Sore throat and mild upper abdominal discomfort are common for some hours after gastroscopy.

If you have more severe symptoms please contact:

- the integrated procedures unit (department 2) on **0161 918 2420** between 7:30am and 7:30pm or
- out of hours (7:30pm to 7:30am) – ring the surgical oncology unit on **0161 446 3860**

We will do our best to make your endoscopy as comfortable and stress free as possible. If you need more information or have suggestions about the care you have received, please call us on **0161 918 2420**.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard.

If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact patient.information@christie.nhs.uk

Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice

The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Visit the Cancer Information Centre

The Christie at Withington **0161 446 8100**

The Christie at Oldham **0161 918 7745**

The Christie at Salford **0161 918 7804**

Open Monday to Friday, 10am – 4pm.

Opening times can vary, please ring to check
before making a special journey.

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