

Gastroscopy Information for patients, whanau and families

This information brochure is for patients having a gastroscopy. It explains what the procedure is, how it is done and provides information about the small chance of side effects or complications as is with any surgical procedure. We have tried to give information to answer your questions. All our gastroscopies are performed at Kensington Hospital in Whangarei. If you cannot find the information in this brochure, please ask your specialist or contact Kensington Hospital.

What is a Gastroscopy?

This is an examination of the inside of your oesophagus (gullet), stomach and the duodenum (the first part of your small intestine). A thin flexible tube (gastroscope) with a small camera at the end is passed through the mouth and is steered into the stomach by your specialist endoscopist. This allows the specialist to see what might be causing any symptoms that you are experiencing.

A small tissue sample may be taken (biopsy) and sent for testing. If you wish this tissue to be returned for cultural or spiritual reasons you need to let us know before the procedure and be aware this may have been preserved in a toxic chemical (formaldehyde) and be in a plastic container to prevent contamination. If further information is required, do not hesitate to ask.

Why do I need a Gastroscopy?

- Nausea (feeling sick), vomiting, indigestion, upper abdominal pain, heartburn or acid reflux
- Vomiting blood or blood in the bowel motion
- Anaemia
- Difficulty in swallowing
- A repeat procedure for previous problems
- Family history of stomach cancer in certain population groups.

These complaints can be caused by a wide variety of disorders, including inflammation of the stomach (gastritis), gastric and duodenal ulcers, dilated veins in the oesophagus, stomach polyps, intestinal bleeding, narrowing (stricture) of the oesophagus, hiatal hernia of the diaphragm, cancer of the stomach or oesophagus.

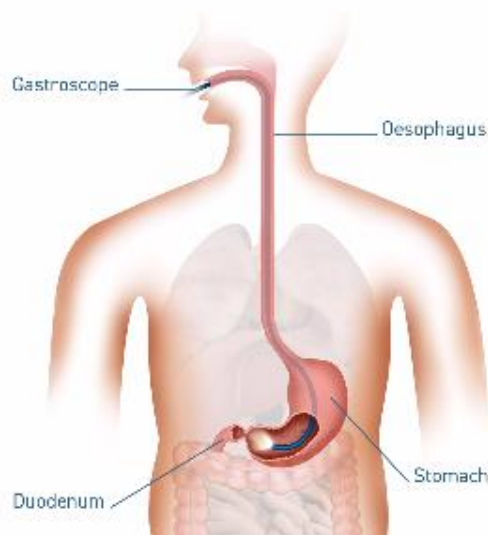
On the Day of your Gastroscopy

It is important to have nothing to eat for six hours before and clear fluids only up to two hours before the procedure.

Please take your normal medication with a small amount of water.

If you are taking blood thinning medication such as Warfarin, Ticagrelor (Brilinta), Clopidogrel (Plavix), Dabigatran (Pradaxa), antacid medications, or oral iron tablets, please contact your specialist's rooms as they may need to be stopped 3-5 days prior to your appointment. Please contact your specialist's room a minimum of a week prior to your appointment.

Please bring a list of any medications you are currently taking to Kensington Hospital. It is important you bring with you any inhalers, angina sprays and diabetic medication.



Procedure Room

The specialist endoscopist will explain the procedure and you will be required to sign a consent form. This confirms that you understand the examination and agree to go ahead. **Please ask any questions you may have.** It is important that you fully understand what is happening.

You will be given a throat spray to numb the back of your throat and usually a combination of a sedative and pain relief before the procedure is commenced. This is not a full anaesthetic and you may be somewhat aware during the procedure.

If you have false teeth you may be required to remove them in the procedure room. They will be returned to you as soon as it is safely possible. A nurse will be with you throughout the procedure. The procedure itself lasts about 5 to 10 minutes.

After the Gastroscopy

You will return to the recovery area. If you had a sedative and local throat spray you will be unable to eat or drink for 20 minutes and need to rest for about 15 to 30 minutes. On recovery you can eat and drink as normal.

If you only have local anaesthetic throat spray you can eat and drink after 20 minutes or as soon as your swallowing is back to normal. The nurse or endoscopist will discuss the result of the examination before you go home and give you a written report. A report will be sent to your GP with the results of any biopsies taken. This may take up to three weeks. You may be required to attend a follow up appointment.

As you have had a sedative you must have a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you for a minimum of six hours. You cannot wait outside for them or catch a taxi or bus alone. You must not drive, drink alcohol, operate machinery or sign important documents for 24 hours after the procedure.

If you develop any severe pain in the neck, chest or abdomen within the next 24 hours after your procedure please contact Kensington Hospital (ph 09 4379080).

What are the Risks of a Gastroscopy?

Most gastroscopies are safe and uncomplicated. However, as with any procedure there is a small chance of side effects or complications. Studies have shown that serious complications such as drug reaction to the sedative, bleeding and perforation are very rare but if they occur, they may require repeat intervention or an operation. You may suffer from a sore throat or feel some wind in your stomach. These will settle in a few days. There is a small risk of damage to crowned teeth or dental bridge work or dislodging loose teeth. You should also be aware that the examination is not perfect and even with a skilled endoscopist some abnormalities may be missed.

This brochure is intended to provide general advice only. It does not provide definitive medical advice. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your specialist via his rooms (ph 09 4373875), or Kensington Hospital (ph 09 4379080).