



Having a gastroscopy

A guide for patients and their carers



Your information checklist: gastroscopy

It is very important that you read this booklet. If you need further information please do not hesitate to contact the department – you will find a phone number at the end of this booklet.

Please tick the following and sign below:

I have read this booklet Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand the information it contains Yes ☐ No ☐

I am aware that biopsies may be taken during this test
Yes ☐ No ☐

I am aware of the risk of bleeding and/or perforation
Yes ☐ No ☐

I am aware that I will have the opportunity to ask further questions when I attend for my appointment.

A gastroscopy can be carried out under sedation and with throat spray.

Sedation is given by injection (through a small tube in your arm) and it will make you feel sleepy and relaxed, although you may not be completely asleep.

However, you do have the option to have the gastroscopy carried out without sedation. If you do not have sedation you will have throat spray on its own.

Signed

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The 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, Salford or Macclesfield.

Welcome to the integrated procedures unit

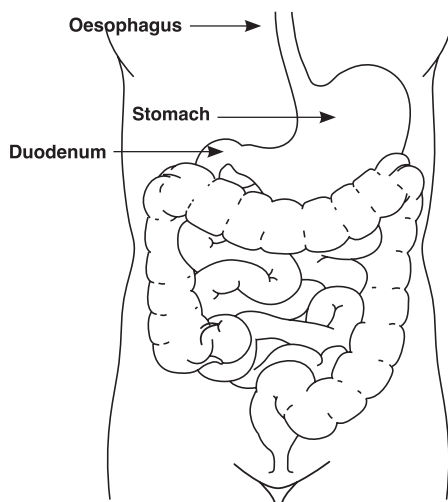
Your doctor has recommended that you have a gastroscopy. This is a procedure using a special tube to look at the lining of your gullet (oesophagus), your stomach and first part of the intestine (duodenum).

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.

What is a gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy 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).



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 and to monitor the stomach after previous 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 most common side effect is a sore throat. Serious complications, such as bleeding or damage to the gullet, bloating and discomfort, 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 of damage 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, apixaban endoxaban, rivaroxaban or any other medication to thin your blood or if you are diabetic, please let the doctor or nurse know as soon as possible by calling **0161 918 2420**

Will I feel anything during the gastroscopy?

The procedure is performed using anaesthetic spray to numb your throat. You may also have an injection to make you sleepy (sedation). Your doctor will discuss both options and help you decide which is best for you. A gastroscopy should not be painful but you may feel some discomfort.

Anaesthetic spray

- Throat spray is not painful. You will be able to breathe through your nose normally throughout the test. The endoscopist and nurse will remain with you throughout the test.
- 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.
- If you choose to have throat spray without sedation you can eat and drink after 1 hour and can drive home.

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 sips of **clear** liquids up to 2 hours before your gastroscopy. This will help us get a clear view of your stomach and prevent the procedure from being cancelled.
- Do take your tablets and medicines as usual on the morning of your gastroscopy. Discontinue any PPI (proton pump inhibitor) medications, such as; **omeprazole, esomeprazole, lansoprazole, and pantoprazole**, 2 weeks before the procedure unless your clinician advises you otherwise. You may use Gaviscon or antacids as a replacement for the PPI medication.

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?

Once you arrive to the integrated procedures unit (IPU) you will be booked in by the receptionist.

A nurse will arrive to admit you for the procedure, ask you questions about your general health, and ask you about your medication and previous medical history. They will also assess your blood pressure and overall health to see whether you are fit for the procedure.

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.

However, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time even after giving your written consent.

If you've had throat spray and are discharged before being able to eat or drink, begin with small sips of water. You can gradually progress to warm drinks and solid food. If you still feel any discomfort, wait half an hour before trying again with sips of water.

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 gastroscope 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 did not have 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 1 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.
- If any biopsies were taken, it's normal to cough up a very small amount of blood. This should subside within 24-48 hours.

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. If you have a gastroscopy in the afternoon you should not return to work until the second day after your 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.

Contacting The Christie

If you develop any of the following symptoms:

- passing blood clots or large amounts of blood
- severe persistent abdominal pain
- black tarry stools
- breathing becomes difficult/breathless
- signs of infection (fever, chills)
- vomiting fresh blood

Please contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or go to your nearest A&E immediately with a copy of your endoscopy report.

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**.

Notes

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

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 **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

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**

The Christie at Macclesfield **0161 956 1704**

Open Monday to Friday, 10am – 4pm.

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

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www.christie.nhs.uk



The Christie Patient Information Service

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