

Diagnostics Procedure

Gastroscopy

1. What is it?

Upper GI endoscopy, also known as gastroscopy, is a minimally invasive diagnostic procedure that allows a gastroenterologist to examine the upper part of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, including the esophagus, stomach, and duodenum. The procedure involves the use of an endoscope, a flexible, thin tube with a light and camera at its tip, which is passed through the mouth into the digestive system to visualize the internal structures and take tissue samples if needed.

2. Why is it done?

Gastroscopy is performed to diagnose and evaluate various gastrointestinal conditions. It is commonly used to investigate symptoms such as persistent heartburn, difficulty swallowing, unexplained weight loss, abdominal pain, or suspected ulcers, inflammation, or tumours in the upper GI tract. The procedure can help detect conditions like gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), peptic ulcers, gastritis, esophagitis, and early signs of upper GI cancers. Gastroscopy is also used for therapeutic purposes, such as removing polyps or foreign objects, and treating bleeding ulcers.

3. How to prepare?

Before the procedure, patients are advised not to eat or drink anything for a specific period, typically for at least six to eight hours. It is essential to inform the healthcare provider about any medications, allergies, or medical conditions, as some medications may need to be adjusted before the procedure. Patients may be instructed to stop taking blood-thinning medications or anti-inflammatory drugs to reduce the risk of bleeding during the endoscopy. A sedative may be given to help the patient relax during the procedure.

4. Risks:

Gastroscopy is considered a safe procedure, but like any medical procedure, it carries some risks. Possible risks include adverse reactions to sedatives or anesthesia, bleeding, and perforation (a rare complication where the endoscope causes a small tear in the lining of the GI tract). However, the likelihood of experiencing these complications is minimal, and the benefits of accurate diagnosis and treatment outweigh the potential risks.

5. Complications

Most gastroscopy procedures are completed without any complications. However, some patients may experience mild throat irritation or discomfort after the procedure. In rare cases, complications like bleeding or perforation may occur. It is crucial for patients to seek medical attention promptly if they experience severe abdominal pain, fever, or persistent bleeding after the procedure.

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6. Recovery

After the gastroscopy, patients are usually kept under observation until the effects of sedation wear off. They may experience some bloating or gas due to the air introduced during the procedure, but this typically resolves quickly. Patients can resume their normal diet and activities once the throat is no longer numb. The gastroenterologist will discuss the findings of the procedure and any necessary follow-up care or treatment. It is essential to follow the post-procedure instructions provided by the healthcare provider to ensure a smooth recovery.