Having a gastroscopy

a guide for patients and their families
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Welcome to the Treatment Centre

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). You will be having your test at Withington Community Hospital. When you arrive there, please report to reception in the Treatment Centre on the first floor.

We want to make you as comfortable as possible during your stay. 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.

If you are a diabetic or take Warfarin or anything to thin your blood, please let us know before the day of your appointment. We are based on the Surgical Day Case Unit at the Christie Hospital, please phone 0161 918 7292 between 9am and 5pm.

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 sometimes 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.

Will I feel anything during the gastroscopy?
The procedure is performed using either anaesthetic spray to numb your throat or an injection into a vein to make you sleepy (sedation). Your doctor will 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 the adult must stay with you until early evening
■ for an afternoon procedure the 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 two 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. Alternatively, 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 breath. 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:

**DO NOT** do any of the following until the day after your procedure:-
■ drive a vehicle
■ operate machinery
■ drink alcohol
■ sign legal documents
■ supervise children on your own

Hot food and drinks are best avoided for the rest of the day if your throat is sore.

You should be ready to return to normal activities by the next day. Sore throat and mild upper abdominal discomfort are common for some hours after gastroscopy.

If you have more severe symptoms please contact:

■ Surgical nurse practitioner for the Colo-rectal surgeons via Christie Hospital switchboard on 0845 226 3000

■ The Surgical Day Case Unit at Christie Hospital on 0161 918 7292

■ Out of hours (5pm to 8am), ring the Christie Hospital switchboard on 0845 226 3000 and ask for the nurse practitioner, bleep 12591 or 12561.

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 let us know phone 0161 446 8045. (If the answerphone is on, please leave a message and we will call you back).
For the visually impaired: Large print versions of the booklets are available, please contact Patient Information on 0161 446 3576 or you can download these from the Christie website at www.christie.nhs.uk.

How to get to Withington Community Hospital

From the M60 Clockwise
- Leave the M60 at junction 5, and at the bottom of the slip road join the A5103 towards Manchester City Centre.
- After passing the junction with the A5145, take the first turning on the right into Nell Lane.
- Withington Community Hospital is on the right just after Elizabeth Stringer Road.

From the M60 Anticlockwise
- Leave the M60 at junction 5, and at the bottom of the slip road turn right onto the A5103 heading towards Manchester City Centre.
- After passing the junction with the A5145, take the first turning on the right into Nell Lane.
- Withington Community Hospital is on the right just after Elizabeth Stringer Road.

From Manchester City Centre
- Leave Manchester City Centre via the A5103 towards Didsbury and the M56.
- Just before the junction with the A5145, take the first turning on the left into Nell Lane.
- Withington Community Hospital is on the right just after Elizabeth Stringer Road.

By train
- The nearest mainline station is Manchester Piccadilly.
- Taxis are available from outside the station.

By bus
- Buses to the hospital go from the nearby Piccadilly Gardens Bus Station.