

Gastroenterology – Gastroscopy

Introduction

A gastroscopy is a procedure where a thin, flexible tube called an endoscope is used to look inside the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and first part of the small intestine (duodenum).

It's also sometimes referred to as an upper gastrointestinal [endoscopy](#).

The endoscope has a light and a camera at one end. The camera sends images of the inside of your oesophagus, stomach and duodenum to a monitor.

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

Guidance for Patients

A gastroscopy often takes less than 15 minutes, although it may take longer if it's being used to treat a condition.

It's usually carried out as an outpatient procedure, which means you will not have to spend the night in hospital.

Before the procedure, your throat will be numbed with a [local anaesthetic](#) spray. You can also choose to have a sedative, if you prefer. This means you will still be awake, but will be drowsy and have reduced awareness about what's happening.

The doctor carrying out the procedure will place the endoscope in the back of your mouth and ask you to swallow the first part of the tube. It will then be guided down your oesophagus and into your stomach.

The procedure is not usually painful, but it may be unpleasant or uncomfortable at times.

Read more about [how a gastroscopy is performed](#).

It is important that while you are waiting for your procedure you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this reviewed at your GP surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping, advice can be found at your local pharmacy or Doctor's surgery.

Find out your BMI

Follow this link to the [NHS BMI Calculator](#)

BMI of 25+

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher the [Better Health Let's Do This – Lose Weight](#) website provides online support to help you lose weight and includes access to the NHS 12 week weight loss plan.

The NHS 12 week fitness plan will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- [One You Eat Better \(website\)](#) - includes Easy Meals app for healthy meals and the Change4Life Food Scanner to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet
- [Better Health - Get Active \(website\)](#) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable Active 10 app, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening –severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains –please dial 999.

GP surgeries are still open

GP practice staff are also helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments. GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic and GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it. When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

Contact Us

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