

Upper Endoscopy

What Is An Upper Endoscopy?

An upper endoscopy, or EGD, is a procedure that your doctor does to examine the lining of the upper part of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, including the esophagus, stomach, and the upper intestine (duodenum). In order to see these areas, your doctor will insert a flexible, narrow tube with a light and tiny camera attached to it (endoscope), through your mouth and into your esophagus, stomach, and upper part of your small intestine (duodenum).

The procedure can either be done in a hospital or at an outpatient center.

Why Do I Need An Upper Endoscopy?

An upper endoscopy is done if your doctor suspects you have a problem in your upper GI tract based on the symptoms you are having. Common reasons to have an upper endoscopy are persistent upper abdominal pain; vomiting blood; persistent nausea or vomiting; or difficulty swallowing food.

Any areas that look abnormal can be biopsied and the tissue sent to the laboratory for testing. Your doctor may also take a biopsy to test for *H. pylori*, a common cause of ulcers. Neither of these tests are painful.

An upper endoscopy can also be used to treat problems that your doctor finds during the procedure. Your doctor can pass special surgical tools through the endoscope to stretch, or dilate, any narrowed area; remove polyps, which are usually benign growths; and stop any areas that are bleeding.

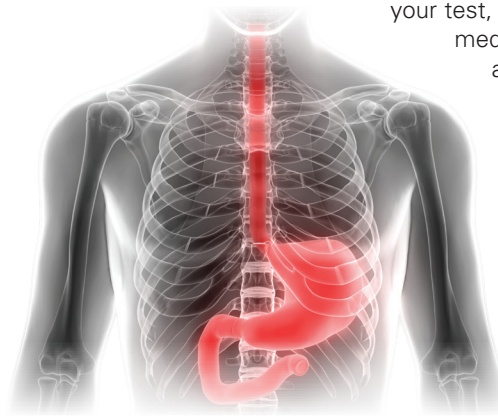
How Do I Prepare For An Upper Endoscopy?

It is important that your stomach is empty for your upper endoscopy, so you will be asked to stop eating and drinking anything 6 to 8 hours before your procedure.

While most medications are safe to take before your test, you may be asked to stop taking certain medications. In order for your doctor to decide if any of your medications need to be stopped, it is essential that you let them know all of the medications you are taking, including supplements and herbal remedies.

You won't be able to drive yourself home, so it is important that you have someone go with you to the outpatient center or hospital.

If you think you could be pregnant you need to notify your doctor before the procedure.



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What Can I Expect During An Upper Endoscopy?

Before your upper endoscopy, your doctor will review your medical history and all of the medications you are taking. The procedure will be explained to you and you will be asked to sign a consent form allowing your doctor to perform the upper endoscopy. If you have any questions about the test now is the time to ask them.

You will also have an IV started that allows your doctor to give you light sedation and medication to prevent pain. If needed, a local anesthetic may be sprayed in the back of your throat before the upper endoscopy. If your procedure is expected to be long or complex, you may have an anesthesiologist give you heavy sedation.

When you are taken into the procedure room, you will be asked to lie on your left side. Once your doctor starts the test, you may feel some bloating from the air that the endoscope pumps into your stomach but you shouldn't feel anything painful.

The entire process usually takes about 30 minutes.

What Can I Expect Immediately Following An Upper Endoscopy?

After your upper endoscopy, you will be monitored in the recovery area until your sedation wears off. You are likely to feel tired and have problems concentrating for the rest of the day. Because of this, it is recommended that you go home and rest until you feel back to your normal self.

You may feel a bit bloated but this should go away pretty quickly. You may also have a sore throat for a day or two after the procedure.

Once you can swallow normally, you should be able to start eating a regular diet.

When you are sent home, you will be given a list of instructions on how to care for yourself after the upper endoscopy. It is important to follow these instructions.

How Long Will It Take To Get The Results Of The Procedure?

Some of the results from your upper endoscopy will be available right away. Once your sedation has worn off, your doctor will discuss the results of the procedure with you. However, you may not remember the conversation very well because of the sedation, so you may want a friend or family member to hear the results too.

If you had a biopsy taken, the doctor will send the tissue to the laboratory for an examination. The biopsy results can take a few days or more to come back. Once your doctor has a chance to review the results, they may call you to discuss the results or ask you to schedule an appointment to discuss what needs to be done next.

What Are The Complications Of An Upper Endoscopy?

An upper endoscopy is a safe procedure and serious complications are rare. Complications that can occur are infection or bleeding. Rarely, a small hole or tear in the upper GI tract can occur that requires immediate surgery to repair. Some people may have a reaction to a medication used during the procedure.

You should call your doctor right away if you experience any of the following:

- Severe abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Fever greater than 100.4 F
- Chest pain
- Difficulty swallowing or severe throat pain that is getting worse
- Problems breathing
- Black stools

Where Can You Get More Information About Upper Endoscopy?

- **American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy**
<https://www.asge.org/home/for-patients/patient-information/understanding-upper-endoscopy>
- **Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons**
<https://www.sages.org/publications/patient-information/patient-information-for-upper-endoscopy-from-sages/>
- **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases**
<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/upper-gi-endoscopy>

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