



Patient & Family Guide  
2017

# Gastroscopy

Dartmouth General  
Hospital

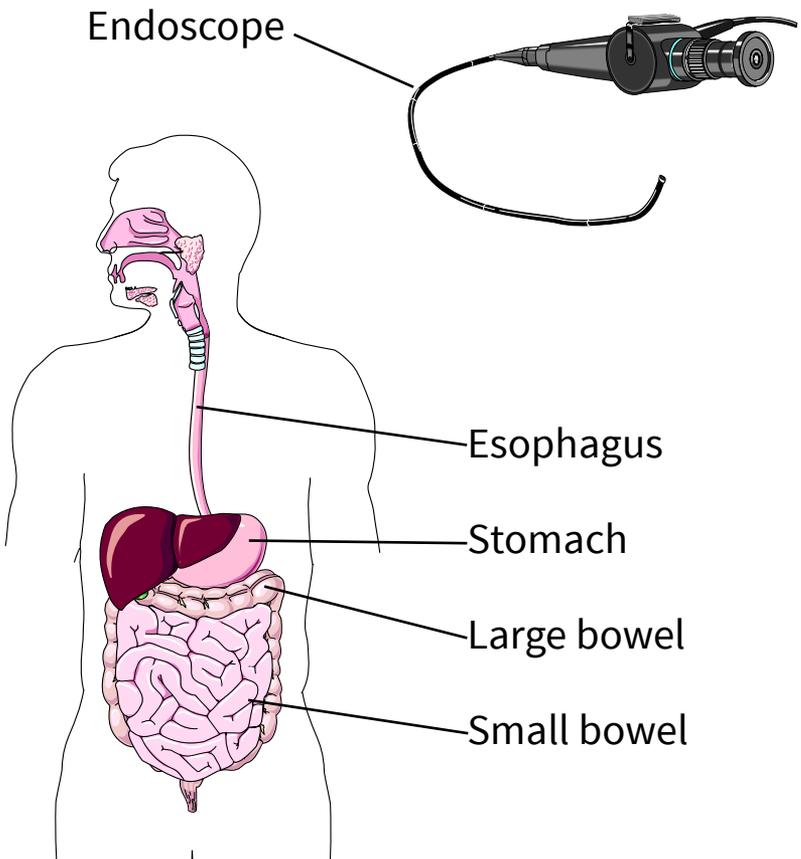


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# Gastroscopy: Dartmouth General Hospital

## What is a gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy is an exam of the upper gastrointestinal (GI) tract. This includes the esophagus (throat), stomach and duodenum (first part of the small bowel). The doctor uses a special tube (endoscope) that bends and has a small light and camera on one end to look for any changes on the inside of your upper GI tract.



## How do I get ready for my gastroscopy?

It is **VERY** important that you get ready by doing these things:

- You may wish to plan a day off work for the day of your test. Most people can go back to work the day after their test.
- If your appointment is **before noon**, **do not eat or drink anything after midnight** before the test. This includes water. If you eat or drink anything after midnight, the exam will be less accurate because the doctor will not be able to see properly.
- If your test is **after noon**, you may have clear liquids up until 6 hours before the test. A glass of clear juice (such as apple juice) and **one** cup of tea or coffee **without** milk or cream is fine.

This pamphlet is just a guide. Please talk to your health care provider about your questions. We are here to help you.

## On the day of your test

**If you will be getting sedation, you must have a responsible adult take you home and care for you after your test. Please arrange for this ahead of time.**

- Take all of your usual heart, blood pressure or breathing medicine on the day of the test.
- If you are diabetic and on medicine and/or insulin, talk with your doctor. You may need special instructions on taking these medicines before your test.
- Tell the doctor about any drug allergies you may have.
- **Bring a list of all of your medicines to the test.**
- **Do not** wear any jewelry or bring any valuables with you. The hospital is not responsible for any lost items.
- **Do not** wear any perfumed products to the test. NSHA is scent-free and smoke-free.

**If you need to cancel your test, please call your specialist at least 3 days (72 hours) before.** This will give us time to book another patient in your time slot.

## **Where do I go on the day of my test?**

- You will be given the date and time for your test.
- Please arrive 30 minutes before your test time.
- Go to Patient Registration, Main Floor, Dartmouth General Hospital.
- Bring your Provincial Health Card with you.

## **How is the test done?**

- An intravenous (IV) may be started in your arm.
- We may give you medicine through your IV to help with pain and to help you relax just before the test is started.
- If you choose not to have the IV sedative, your throat will be sprayed with a numbing mixture. After your throat is numb, you will not be able to gag for a short time. This will make it easier on you when the doctor puts the endoscope in place. You will not be able to drink for 1 to 2 hours after the test.

- The specialist will put the endoscope through your mouth, into your stomach and then into the duodenum.
- You may gag as the endoscope passes through your mouth into your throat. Passing the endoscope should be painless and will not change your breathing.
- The specialist will put air into your stomach through the endoscope. The air slightly inflates (makes bigger) your upper GI tract, and helps the doctor get a clear look at the lining of your esophagus, stomach and duodenum. Adding the air may make you feel bloated or give you some gas.
- The doctor may wish to take a tissue sample or take out a polyp (small piece of tissue) during the test. This will not hurt and is nothing to worry about.

## What happens after my test is over?

- The test should take about 10 minutes.
- After a 30 to 45 minute stay in the recovery room, you may go home with a **responsible adult** (if you have had sedation).
- You may feel mild stomach cramping. If it gets worse, please call 811 or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

**Call your family doctor or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have any of the following after leaving the hospital:**

- › A lot of stomach pain
- › Bleeding
- › Vomiting (throwing up)

**What are your questions? Please ask your doctor or nurse, or call your specialist.**

**We are here to help you.**

## What do I need to know if I've had sedation?

- A responsible adult must take you home and care for you.
- The person who is taking you home **must** come to the Day Surgery Unit at the Dartmouth General Hospital.
- **Do not** walk or take the bus home. You may take a taxi **only** if you go with a responsible adult who can help you if needed.

### **For the next 24 hours after sedation:**

- › Do not drive a car or run any heavy machinery.
- › Do not drink alcohol.
- › Do not care for others.
- › Do not sign any legal or important papers.

## **Are there any risks with this test?**

A gastroscopy is a minor procedure with very little risk when done by a trained professional, but, as with any test, there are some things you should know:

- There is about a 1 in 5,000 chance of having a tear (perforation) through the lining of the esophagus or stomach. Surgery may be needed to fix the tear.
- There is a 1 in 10,000 chance that bleeding may happen if a tissue sample was taken. This bleeding may stop on its own but may also need more treatment.
- Some patients may develop problems because of the sedatives or any existing heart or lung diseases. Please tell your specialist if you've had any trouble with these types of issues in the past.
- Some people may be sore where the IV was put in. Don't worry if there is a lump at the IV site, as this should go away on its own over a few weeks.



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*Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

**Nova Scotia Health Authority**

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.