

Upper Endoscopy

Upper endoscopy (esophagogastroduodenoscopy, EGD) is a procedure where your doctor will use a thin, hollow, soft and flexible tube which has its own lens and light source (endoscope), which will view the images on a video monitor. The procedure allows your doctor to examine the lining of the upper part of your upper gastrointestinal tract, which includes the esophagus, stomach and duodenum (first portion of the small intestine).

Indications

Upper endoscopy is done to evaluate conditions such as:

1. Persistent upper abdominal pain,
2. Nausea and or vomiting
3. Difficulty in swallowing
4. Upper GI bleeding
5. Unexplained anemia, weight loss
6. GERD (gastro-esophageal reflux disease).

Biopsies

Your doctor might take some biopsies during the procedure. The doctor may use the biopsy to distinguish between benign and malignant (cancerous) tissues. Taking a biopsy does not necessarily mean there is a suspicion of cancer. The biopsy may be taken for testing *Helicobacter Pylori*, bacteria that causes ulcers. Your doctor might also use upper endoscopy to perform a cytology test, where he or she will introduce a small brush to collect cells for analysis

Treatments

Upper endoscopy is also used to treat conditions of upper GI tract. For example, your doctor may dilate a narrowed area, remove polyps or treat bleeding. Therefore, the upper endoscopy may be of diagnostic as well as therapeutic value.

Preparation

you should have nothing to eat or drink, including water, for at least six hours before the examination because, an empty stomach allows for the best and safest examination, your doctor or one of the assistants will give you the appropriate preparation instructions.

Medications

You may continue most medications as usual, but some medications can interfere with the preparation or the examination. Inform your doctor about medications you're taking, particularly aspirin products or anti-platelet agents, arthritis medications, anticoagulants (blood thinners such as warfarin or heparin), clopidogrel, insulin or iron products. Also, be sure to mention any allergies you have to medications.

What to expect during the procedure?

In order to help you relax, your doctor may start by spraying your throat with a local anesthetic or by giving you a sedative or anesthesia. You'll then lie on your side, and your doctor will pass the endoscope through your mouth and into the esophagus, stomach and duodenum. The endoscope doesn't interfere with your breathing. Most patients fall asleep during the procedure and to others it causes only a mild discomfort.

What to expect after the endoscopy?

You will be monitored until the effects of the medication have worn off. Your throat might be a little sore, and you might feel bloated because of the air introduced into your stomach during the test. You will be able to eat after you leave unless your doctor instructs you otherwise. Your physician will explain the results of the examination to you. However, the results of the biopsy if taken may take up to a week and your doctor may need you to appointment to discuss the results of the biopsy if positive.

After the procedure, you must not drive the day of the procedure and someone must drop you home. Even if you are alert, the medications may cause your judgment and/or reflexes to be impaired for the rest of the day.

What are the possible complications of upper endoscopy?

The complications are rare especially when the procedure is performed by doctors who are specially trained and experienced in this procedure perform the test but can still occur. These include:

- Bleeding can occur at a biopsy site or from where a polyp was removed but it's usually minimal and rarely requires follow-up.
- Perforation or a tear in the gastrointestinal tract lining that may require surgery but this is a very uncommon complication.
- Reaction to the sedatives can occur.
- Complications from preexisting heart or lung diseases can occur.

For further information please visit American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy at:

<http://www.asge.org/patients/patients.aspx?id=378>