

Gastroenterology - Endoscopy of Upper GI Tract (Gastroscopy)

Introduction

The COVID-19 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. This guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

When you are waiting for further treatment, it can sometimes feel like a long wait. The information and advice is aimed at helping you manage that wait so you arrive for your appointment in the best possible physical and mental health.

The NHS has limited resources which means that we are unable to treat you as quickly as we would like. Each healthcare provider must consider the type of help you need, how quickly you need treatment, the best course of action to help you and when and where you can be seen.

The process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. The system of prioritisation is applied consistently across the NHS to help us to decide the order in which patients receive their treatment. This is essential to ensure that we provide care based on need. The system means that care is delivered in the fairest way possible.

Once a referral has been made from primary care to secondary care, the specialist team conduct assessments and then agree with you on the right course of action. At this stage, the urgency will be assessed. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

Your GP /Consultant has recommended a gastroscopy test. A gastroscopy test is an examination that allows us to look directly at the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract; the oesophagus; the stomach and around the duodenum, the first bend of the small intestine. You will receive a patient information leaflet explaining the test in more detail and how to prepare for the procedure.

You will be asked to stop eating and drinking for 6 hours before your test and to bring a list of your medications. This test takes a very short time and most patients have a spray to numb the throat before the test. If you think you may require a light sedative then you will need to stay with us a little longer for recovery and will be unable to drive for the next 24 hours. You will also be required to have a responsible adult with you overnight.

The Dorset County hospital website (dchft.nhs.uk) also provides further information including a patient video of what to expect on the day. This can be accessed at www.dchft.nhs.uk - A-Z services - Endoscopy.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Guidance for Patients

Common reasons for having a gastroscopy are to investigate symptoms such as:

- Indigestion, nausea or difficulty swallowing.
- It can show if there is inflammation, an ulcer or a polyp or other growth
- it can identify GORD - Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease which is when you keep getting heartburn and acid reflux.

Gastroscopy is also used to diagnose and monitor conditions such as Barrett's oesophagus. This is a condition in which the lining of the oesophagus changes from the normal structure.

There is more detailed guidance available on the NHS.UK website and from gutscharity.org.uk

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Please contact your GP if you feel your symptoms are getting worse whilst you are waiting for your procedure. There are medications you may be able to take to help with reflux, heartburn and indigestion.

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it is 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.

Contact Us

We have an Endoscopy helpline on 01305 253152 Mon- Fri 08.00-17.00. We will return your call within 24 hours.