Your Consultant or doctor has advised you to have a Gastroscopy.

What is a Gastroscopy?

A Gastroscopy is a very accurate way of looking at the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and first part of the small intestine – the duodenum. The test usually takes no more than five minutes.

What are benefits of a Gastroscopy?

It allows your doctor to see if there is any disease present. It also allows if necessary a sample of tissue to be taken (called a biopsy), which is examined by the Pathology Department.

What are the risks of a Gastroscopy?

- There is a very small risk of perforation approximately 1 in 1,000 (making a small hole in the lining of your gullet, stomach or duodenum). This is rare and if it happened would require an admission into hospital for treatment.
- There is a very small risk of bleeding if samples of tissue are taken (usually minor).
- There is a small chance of a reaction to the medicines used for sedation or occasionally even from throat spray.
- You may have a slightly sore throat following the procedure, which will usually wear off within 24 hours.
- You must let the nurse know if you have any loose teeth, caps or crowns, as there is a risk they could become dislodged.

Are there any alternatives to this procedure?

Barium meal is an alternative investigation but it does not allow the doctor to view the lining of the gullet, stomach and first part of the small bowel directly or take samples of tissue in order to diagnose your particular problem. Any abnormalities found at barium meal will usually result in the doctor referring you for a Gastroscopy.

What will happen if I don’t have this procedure done?

If you decide that you do not want a Gastroscopy then you can ask your doctor if you can have the alternative procedure of barium meal. However, this may result in the doctor not being able to diagnose your problem and give you the correct treatment and your symptoms may get worse.
What anaesthetic or sedation will I be given?

There are two ways that a Gastroscopy can be done.

- **Using a local anaesthetic spray**

  A local anaesthetic spray is used to numb your throat. You will be awake through the procedure. The advantage of this method are that you can talk to the endoscopist (a doctor or nurse experienced in performing these procedures) immediately after the test and then drive home, go to work etc.

- **Using intravenous sedation**

  This method involves an injection that is given into your arm via a plastic tube (cannula) which will make you slightly drowsy and relaxed. You will not be unconscious. The medicines used in sedation may affect your memory or concentration for up to 24 hours. Many patients remember nothing about the procedure or even what the doctor has said to them afterwards.

  **For these reasons, you must have a friend or relative collect you from the Gastroenterology unit and we recommend they stay with you.**

  If your appointment is in the afternoon your escort is asked to be here no later than 4.30pm

  **You must not drive, ride a bike, drink alcohol, operate machinery or sign important documents for 24 hours following the sedation.**

  A side effect of these medicines is to slow your breathing – this should not normally happen but sometimes patients can be oversensitive to the medicine. This is the main reason we do not give high doses of these medicines. We also will give you oxygen during the test.

  **If you are worried about any of these risks, please speak to your Consultant or a member of their team before you are due to have this treatment.**

**Getting ready for your Gastroscopy**

Do not have anything to eat or drink for at least six hours before your test. This is to make sure that we can have a clear view of your stomach.

- You will be asked to remove any tight clothing, ties, dentures, spectacles and contact lenses.
- Please do not bring large amounts of money or valuables with you as the Trust cannot be held responsible for them

When you come to the department, please tell the doctor or nurse about any medicines you are taking and in particular, about any possible allergies or bad reactions you may have had.

**Your Gastroscopy**

The test involves passing a slim endoscope through the mouth and down into oesophagus and stomach and the first part of your small bowel.
After your Gastroscopy

- If you have had the anaesthetic throat spray, you will be asked to wait approximately 20 minutes until the effect of the throat spray wears off. The nursing staff will check that you are able to swallow before allowing you go home.
- If you have had sedation, you will be taken into the recovery area. You will be given oxygen. A nurse will also record your blood pressure, pulse and in some cases your temperature.

When will I be allowed to go home?

If you have not had sedation and only the local anaesthetic throat spray, you may go approximately 20 minutes after the procedure once you have had a drink.
If you have sedation you will only be allowed home once your relative or friend arrives to collect you from the gastroenterology unit, you have had a drink and the nurse has discharged you. You will be advised to follow the instructions on the aftercare sheet that will be given to you before discharge.

Results

Sometimes the doctor or nurse can let you know after the test what the results are. Sometimes biopsy, photography or other information is taken which may need to be assessed further and the result may not be available for a number of weeks. In this case the result will be sent to your GP or be available to discuss with you during your next clinic appointment.

Cancellations

If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know as soon as possible on 0151 706 2720. We will be able to give your appointment to another patient, and arrange a further one for you.

Further appointment

If your family doctor has sent you for the Gastroscopy you should make an appointment to be reviewed.

If your appointment has been made from a clinic at the hospital then a further follow-up appointment will be made as indicated by the Gastroenterology Department before you leave. You may receive this in the post if not before you leave.

Transport

- Transport has not been arranged for this appointment so it will be necessary for you to make your own arrangements.
- Parking for patients and visitors is available at the Q-Park multi-storey car park opposite the main hospital entrance on Prescot Street. The entrance by car is on Epworth Street off Erskine Street. The car park is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is a private car park and charges apply. The car park is continually monitored by parking hosts.
There are 10 disabled spaces on the entry level of the car park. If you need help, please speak with a parking host at the car park entrance.

If you have been referred to us from clinic and usually have an ambulance to bring you for your appointment, please contact us on 0151 706 2720 as soon as possible.

If you have been referred to us by your family doctor (GP) and need an ambulance please contact their surgery to arrange your ambulance. The Gastroenterology Department needs to be informed that this has been arranged by the surgery.

Further information

Important
If you have:

- Diabetes
- Are taking warfarin tablets or clopidogrel tablets (Plavix)
- Are on dialysis
- Have had a heart attack within the last three months

Please inform the Gastro Unit on 0151 706 2720 immediately you receive this information.

If you have any questions or queries, please contact
The Gastroenterology Unit
(between 10.00am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday)
Tel: 0151 706 2720

Clinic appointment enquiries
Tel: 0151 706 5555

The Accident & Emergency Department is open 24 hours.

Author: Gastroenterology Directorate
Date: November 2008
Review Date: November 2010

This leaflet is available in large print, audio/computer disc, Braille, and other languages on request.