

Sharon R. Roseman, MD, FACP
Practice Limited to Gastroenterology
701 Broad Street, Suite 411 • Sewickley, PA 15143
Phone: 412-749-7160 • Fax: 412-749-7388
www.heritagevalley.org/sharonrosemanmd

UPPER GI ENDOSCOPY

What is Upper GI Endoscopy?

Upper GI endoscopy (also called EGD or esophagogastroduodenoscopy) is a procedure that allows your doctor to examine the lining of the esophagus (food pipe), stomach and duodenum (first part of the small intestine). Using a thin, flexible tube with its own lens and light source, the doctor can view the upper intestinal tract in order to identify any abnormalities. The high quality picture from the endoscope is shown on a TV monitor; it gives a clear, detailed view. In most cases, upper GI endoscopy is a more precise examination than X-ray studies.

Reasons for the Exam

Upper GI endoscopy can be helpful in the evaluation or diagnosis of various problems, including difficult or painful swallowing, pain in the stomach or abdomen, intestinal bleeding, ulcers and tumors.

How do you Prepare for the Procedure?

It is important not to eat or drink anything for at least 4 hours before the exam. Be sure to discuss with your physician whether you should take your usual medications before the procedure and whether you have any drug allergies. It is also important to mention other major diseases, such as heart or lung conditions, which might require special attention during the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form authorizing the physician to perform the procedure. If there is anything you don't understand, ask for more information!

What can you Expect During an Upper GI Endoscopy?

During the procedure, everything will be done to help you be as comfortable as possible. Your blood pressure, pulse, and the oxygen level in your blood will be carefully monitored. If you have dentures or dental work that can be removed, you will be asked to do so before the exam. The throat is often anesthetized by a spray or liquid and intravenous (IV) medication given to relax you, deaden the gag reflex, and cause short-term amnesia. For some patients who can relax on their own, the exam can be done without intravenous sedation. As you lie on your side, the doctor will insert a small mouthpiece. As the endoscope is slowly and carefully inserted, air is introduced through it to help your doctor see well. During the procedure, you should feel no pain and it will not interfere with your breathing. Other instruments can be passed through the endoscopy to perform additional procedures, if necessary. For example, a biopsy (tiny bit of tissue) may be taken for later examination under the microscope. A polyp or tumor can be removed using a thin wire snare and electrocautery (electrical heat). The exam takes from 15-30 minutes. There is no pain with the procedure and many patients do not remember much about it.

Alternative Tests

Alternative tests to upper GI endoscopy include a barium x-ray and ultrasound (sonogram) to study the organs in the upper abdomen. These exams, however, do not allow for a direct viewing of the esophagus, stomach, and duodenum, removing of polyps or taking of biopsies.

What are the Possible Complications from an Upper GI Endoscopy?

A temporary, mild throat irritation sometimes occurs after the exam. You can use lozenges for relief. Serious complications can occur, but are very uncommon. These include perforation – a puncture of the intestinal wall, which could require surgical repair, and bleeding, which could require transfusion. Again, these complications are unlikely. Be sure to discuss any specific concerns you may have with your doctor. Be sure to tell your doctor of any allergies or reactions to medicines, particularly novocaine and medicines that dentists use for numbing teeth. Although complications are uncommon, it is important to recognize early signs of possible complications. If you have a fever after the procedure; trouble swallowing; and/or increasing throat, chest, or abdominal pain, please contact your doctor immediately.

What can you Expect After your Upper GI Endoscopy?

When your endoscopy is completed, you'll be cared for in a recovery area until most of the effects of the medication have worn off. Your doctor will inform you about the results of the procedure and provide any additional information you need to know. If a biopsy has been performed, the results are not available for three to seven days. Do not eat or drink for one hour (your throat will be numb). You should plan on resting for the remainder of the day. This means not driving for the remainder of the day, so you'll need to have a family member or friend take you home.

An Upper GI Endoscopy is an effective technique for evaluating, and in many cases, improving your digestive health!

General Instructions

1. No food after midnight.
2. You may have clear liquids up to 4 hours prior to the exam, then nothing by mouth for 4 hours except for your medications with a small sip of water.
3. Do not skip any of your usual medications.
4. If you take insulin or blood thinners, be sure you have received specific instructions regarding these medications. ***Do not stop these medications on your own!***
5. Make arrangements to have a friend or family member drive you home following the procedure.
6. Please arrive promptly.
7. Please dress comfortably. Leave earrings and other jewelry and any valuables at home.
8. Bring all your medications with you in their original containers.

If you have any questions, please call the office at (412) 749-7160.