

# Understanding Gastroscopy

## Patient information - Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit

### Understanding Gastroscopy

Your doctor has determined that further examination of your gastrointestinal tract is necessary to help them evaluate or treat your condition.

This information sheet has been prepared to help you understand the procedure. Please read it carefully.

### What is a Gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy is a procedure that enables your doctor to look at the lining of the oesophagus (gullet), stomach and part of the duodenum (small bowel) using an endoscope (a thin flexible tube).

### What preparation is required?

For this procedure to be successful, your stomach needs to be empty.

**Do not** have anything to eat *or* drink **6 hours** *before* the procedure

### What about my current medications?

Please contact us as soon as possible for further instructions if you are:

- Taking an anticoagulant medication such as warfarin, dabigatran, rivaroxaban *OR* anti-platelet therapy such clopidogrel, dipyridamole or ticagrelor.
- Have a pacemaker *OR* internal cardiac defibrillator.
- Are taking iron supplements.
- If you are taking aspirin, please continue this as normal.

All other essential medications such as heart medications, psychiatric medications, steroids and epilepsy medications, can be taken as usual with a small mouthful of water.

Please bring **all** your medications to the appointment, especially any nitrolingual sprays, asthma inhalers or diabetic medications.

If you need advice on how to manage your diabetes before to the procedure, please contact your GP. Information is also available on [www.healthinfo.co.nz](http://www.healthinfo.co.nz)

## Where can I park?

Parking at Christchurch Hospital is limited. Please allow time to find a car park.

There is a public car park on the corner of St Asaph Street and Antigua Street.

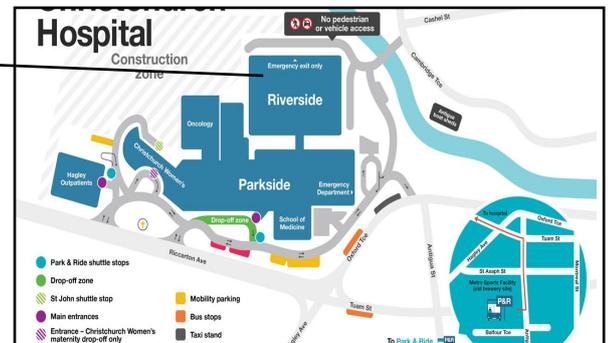
You will need to pay for your parking at the public car park.

Parking costs: \$2/hour or \$5 for the day—cash or credit cards.

## On arrival

Please report to:     Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit  
                              2nd floor  
                              Riverside building  
                              Christchurch Hospital.

The receptionist will check your details and a member of the nursing team will undertake a brief nursing assessment prior to the procedure.



## Consent

Before the procedure can begin you will need to sign a consent form to agree to proceed. This consent form has been sent to you in the mail, so you can read it and think of any questions you would like to ask before agreeing to proceed.

A Nurse or Endoscopist will discuss the procedure with you and explain the possible complications and side effects before asking you to sign the consent form to proceed.

If you later change your mind you are entitled to withdraw your consent even *after* signing.

## What can be expected during the procedure?

You can choose to have your procedure carried out by either:

**(a)** Numbing your throat with a local anesthetic spray (bitter taste)

OR

**(b)** Administering a mild sedative to help you relax.

If you chose to have a sedative, this will be administered to you at regular intervals through a small needle placed into the back of your hand. This will keep you relaxed and comfortable. It has a mild amnesia-like effect, so you may not remember having the procedure at all.

You will also receive oxygen throughout the procedure via a nasal cannula that sits in your nose. You will have a small peg-like device clipped on to your finger. This device will monitor your heart rate and oxygen levels.

A small mouth-guard will be placed between your teeth. If you have loose dentures these will be removed for safe-keeping during the procedure. The Endoscopist will then gently insert the endoscope through the mouth-guard, down your oesophagus, into your stomach and then the duodenum.

Air will be used to inflate the stomach and duodenum so the Endoscopist can clearly see all the surfaces. This may be uncomfortable and cause a little bloating, but it is not painful. Air will be removed at the end of the procedure. There is plenty of room around the endoscope to allow you to breathe normally.

A nurse may also use a small suction tube to clear the saliva from your mouth.

A biopsy (small tissue sample) may be taken during the procedure to be sent to the laboratory for more tests. You will not feel this being done.

### **After the procedure**

You will taken to our recovery area and your blood pressure, heart rate, respirations and oxygen levels will be monitored until you are awake.

You will then be given something to eat and drink before going home.

A nurse will explain the findings of the procedure to you and give you a copy of the gastroscopy report to take home. A copy will also be sent to your referring doctor.

### **How long will it take?**

Please allow at least **2 hours** for your appointment, as delays may occur due to acute endoscopy procedures. We would advise you to bring a book, magazine or iPod with you to help pass the time.

The test itself takes 5-10 minutes, and if you do not have sedation you will be able to go home immediately after the procedure. If you had a sedative you will need at least one hour to recover.

### **Post procedure**

Please make arrangements for someone to collect you and care for you **24 hours** after the procedure.

Even if you feel alert after the procedure you must not:

- *Drive a car*
- *Operate machinery*
- *Drink alcohol*
- *Sign any legal documents or*
- *Ride on public transport alone*

The sedation makes you forgetful and can impair your judgment and reflexes.

### **Possible complications post gastroscopy**

The majority of gastroscopies are safe and uncomplicated when undertaken by experienced Endoscopists, but as with any procedure there is a small risk of side effects or complications.

You may suffer from a sore throat or feel some wind in your stomach. This will settle in a few days. Serious complications such as drug reactions, bleeding and perforation are rare.

## Important information

If you develop *severe pain* in your neck, chest or abdomen within 24 hours of your procedure, please:

- Phone the Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit *before* 6:00 pm Monday to Friday to speak with a nurse OR
- Go to an After Hours Medical Centre OR
- Go to the Hospital Emergency Department.

## Confirm your appointment

Please telephone to confirm your appointment:

**Phone: (03) 364 0921**

If you do not have a relative or support person who can care for you 24 hours after the procedure, please talk to our staff about your 'after procedure' care options when you phone to confirm your appointment.

## Interpreter service

If you require an interpreter service, please ask an English speaking person to call us as soon as possible so we can arrange an interpreter for you.

For more information about:

- *Your health and medication*, go to: [www.healthinfo.org.nz](http://www.healthinfo.org.nz)
- *Hospital and specialist services*, go to: [www.cdhb.health.nz](http://www.cdhb.health.nz)