

Upper Endoscopy

Upper endoscopy enables the physician to look inside the esophagus, stomach, and duodenum (first part of the small intestine). The procedure might be used to discover the reason for swallowing difficulties, nausea, vomiting, reflux, bleeding, indigestion, abdominal pain, or chest pain. Upper endoscopy is also called EGD, which stands for esophagogastroduodenoscopy (eh-SAH-fuh-goh-GAS-troh-doo-AH-duh-NAH-skuh-pee).

For the procedure you will swallow a thin, flexible, lighted tube called an endoscope (EN-doh-skope). You will receive a sedative to help you relax during the exam. The anesthetist will monitor your vital signs during the exam. The endoscope transmits an image of the inside of the esophagus, stomach, and duodenum, so the physician can carefully examine the lining of these organs. The scope also blows air into the stomach; this expands the folds of tissue and makes it easier for the physician to examine the stomach.

The physician can see abnormalities, like inflammation or bleeding, through the endoscope that don't show up well on x rays. The physician can also insert instruments into the scope to treat bleeding abnormalities or remove samples of tissue (biopsy) for further tests.

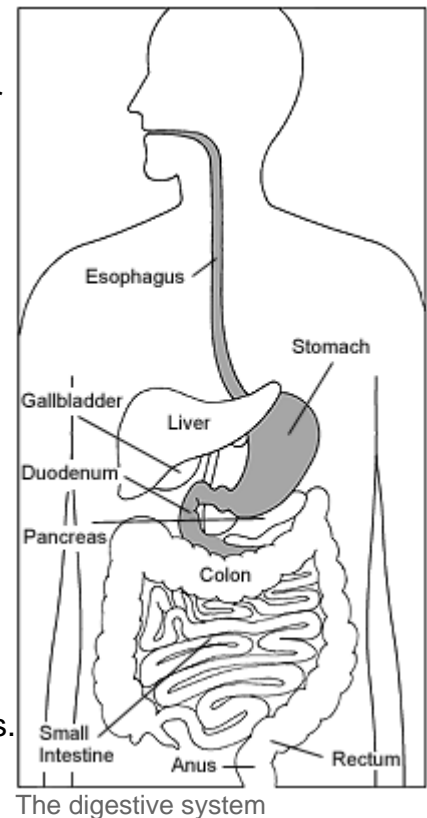
Possible complications of upper endoscopy include bleeding and puncture of the stomach lining. If you have a fever after the test, trouble swallowing or increasing throat, chest or abdominal pain, tell your doctor immediately. However, such complications are rare. Your throat might be a little sore, and you might feel bloated because of the air introduced into your stomach during the test. Read your discharge instructions carefully.

The procedure usually takes less than 20 minutes. The sedative medicine should keep you from feeling discomfort during the exam. You will need to rest at the endoscopy facility until you are awake enough to be safely escorted home.

Preparation

Your stomach and duodenum must be empty for the procedure to be thorough and safe, so you will not be able to eat or drink anything, including water, before the examination. Your doctor will tell you when to start fasting.

The medical staff will also want to know if you have heart disease, lung disease, or any medical condition that may need special attention. Because you will be given a sedative, you must also arrange for someone to take you home and stay with you. Even if you feel alert after the procedure, your judgment and reflexes could be impaired for the rest of the day. Generally, your entire stay in the facility should be less than two hours.



For More Information

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