

# Your child's gastroscopy

## Information for children, families and carers

We have given you this factsheet because your child has an upcoming appointment for a gastroscopy. It explains what a gastroscopy is and what the procedure involves so you know what to expect and can help to prepare your child. We hope it helps to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

### Important information

If your child is due to have a colonoscopy on the same day as their gastroscopy, please follow the preparation advice in the [Bowel preparation for your child's colonoscopy factsheet](#) we have given you rather than the preparation advice in this factsheet.

## What is a gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy is a test to check inside your throat, oesophagus (food pipe), stomach and duodenum (first part of the small intestine). It involves having a long, thin, flexible tube with a small camera inside it (called a gastroscope) passed into your mouth then down your throat and into your stomach and duodenum.

## Why has my child been referred for a gastroscopy?

Your child's doctor may have referred your child for a gastroscopy to help them:

- work out the cause of your child's symptoms
- provide a diagnosis
- decide on the best treatment option

If you are unsure why your child has been referred for a gastroscopy, please speak to your child's doctor. Alternatively, you can contact our paediatric gastroenterology nurse specialist team using the details at the end of this factsheet.

## How should I prepare my child for the procedure?

We will send you a letter with instructions on how to prepare your child for their procedure. We have included the information on the next page as a reminder.

## Eating and drinking

If your child is having a **morning** procedure, they must not eat any food after 2.30am on the morning of their procedure. However, they can drink clear fluids (for example, water or diluted squash) up until 7.30am.

If your child is having an **afternoon** procedure, they must not eat any food after 7.30am on the morning of their procedure. However, they can drink clear fluids (for example, water or diluted squash) up until 12.30pm.

**If your child is having a colonoscopy on the same day as their gastroscopy, please follow the eating and drinking advice in the separate [Bowel preparation for your child's colonoscopy factsheet](#) we have given you.**

## Medication

If your child is currently taking any medication, we will advise you whether they need to stop taking this before their procedure.

## General anaesthetic

Your child will need to have a general anaesthetic (medicine that sends you to sleep) for this procedure. Having a general anaesthetic will mean that that your child will remain still for the procedure and will not feel any pain.

## Who will perform the procedure?

The procedure will be performed by a trained endoscopist (this may be a doctor or a nurse specialist).

## Where will the procedure be performed?

We will perform the procedure in an operating theatre. Please see your child's appointment letter for more details.

## What will happen before the procedure?

When you arrive for your child's gastroscopy, we will explain what will happen during the procedure and answer any questions you or your child may have. If you are happy to go ahead with the procedure, we will then ask you to sign a consent form.

An anaesthetist (a specialist doctor who is trained in giving general anaesthetic and sedation) will also meet with you and your child. At this appointment, the anaesthetist will explain what having a general anaesthetic involves, including the potential risks and side effects.

It is important that you let the anaesthetist know if your child has:

- any known allergies
- had a reaction to any drugs or tests in the past
- any loose teeth (there is a risk of teeth being dislodged or damaged by the gastroscope)

We will then ask your child to change into a hospital gown. Please note that your child will be able to wear their own underwear underneath the gown.

The anaesthetist will then give your child the general anaesthetic. This will be given either as a:

- liquid that's injected into their veins through a cannula (a thin, plastic tube that feeds into a vein, usually on the back of the hand) or
- gas that they breathe in through a mask

You will be able to stay with your child until they are asleep. We will then show you where you can wait while your child has their procedure.

## What will happen during the procedure?

Once the general anaesthetic has taken effect, we will pass a gastroscope into your child's mouth and then down into their oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. As we do this, we will take small samples of tissue (biopsies). The samples we take will be the size of breadcrumbs. We will then send these samples to our laboratory for analysis.

The anaesthetist will carefully monitor your child's condition throughout their procedure.

## How long will it take?

The procedure will take approximately one hour. However, you should expect to be in hospital for four to five hours in total.

Your child will usually be able to go home on the same day as their procedure unless we advise you otherwise.

## Are there any risks or complications?

A gastroscopy is a safe procedure, but as with any medical procedure there are some possible risks and complications.

Complications can include:

- **Bleeding** - This may be from the site where we have taken a biopsy or from minor damage caused by the gastroscope. If this occurs, the bleeding will usually stop by itself. Occasionally, observation and further treatment in hospital may be necessary.
- **Perforation (a tear or a small hole) in the oesophagus, stomach or small intestine** - This is a very rare and serious complication. If this occurs, observation in hospital is necessary. Occasionally, surgery may be needed. We will discuss this with you, if appropriate.

If your child experiences any complications during or after their procedure, they may need to stay in hospital longer than expected so that we can provide any necessary treatment.

## What will happen after the procedure?

We will take your child to the recovery room where we will monitor them until they come round from the general anaesthetic. Once your child is awake, a member of our team will collect you from where you are waiting and take you to see your child. We will then move your child to the John Atwell day ward to continue their recovery (unless they are already an inpatient on another ward).

We will give your child something to eat and drink to check that they are able to swallow normally.

After the procedure, it is normal for your child to experience the following side effects:

- windy, cramp-like pain
- a sore throat

These side effects should settle within 24 to 48 hours. If you have any concerns, please contact us on **023 8120 3814** for advice. Alternatively, you can contact the ward your child was being cared for on or your child's general practitioner (GP) for advice.

Before your child leaves the ward, we will explain what we have done today and what we have found. We will also give you:

- a copy of your consent form
- an advice sheet on what your child should and should not do after their procedure
- follow-up advice
- a prescription (if needed)

As your child has had a general anaesthetic, they will need to have a responsible adult to take them home and stay with them overnight.

For 24 hours after having a general anaesthetic, your child must not:

- drive
- operate machinery
- drink alcohol
- sign important documents

## When should I seek urgent medical help?

Sometimes complications can occur up to two weeks after the procedure.

Go to your nearest emergency department or call **999** for an ambulance if your child experiences:

- extreme cramp-like pains in their abdomen (stomach)
- unexplained pains in their chest

Please take a copy of your child's discharge summary with you so that you can show it to the healthcare professional caring for your child.

## When will I receive my child's results?

It may take a few weeks for the laboratory to analyse your child's tissue samples (biopsies). When the results are available, they will be sent to the doctor who referred your child for the gastroscopy. Your child's doctor will then contact you to discuss their results or to arrange a follow-up appointment.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Paediatric gastroenterology nurse specialists

Telephone: **023 8120 3814** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5.30pm)

Email: [paedsgastronurses@uhs.nhs.uk](mailto:paedsgastronurses@uhs.nhs.uk)

Alternatively, if we are unable to answer your call, please call our hospital switchboard on **023 8077 7222** and ask for bleep **1392** or **2776**.

## Useful links

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyGhrYmYSZY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyGhrYmYSZY)

If your child is having a colonoscopy: [www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Childhealth/Bowel-preparation-for-your-childs-colonoscopy-2737-PIL.pdf](https://www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Childhealth/Bowel-preparation-for-your-childs-colonoscopy-2737-PIL.pdf)

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**For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit [www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport](https://www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport)**