



Endoscopy





What is an endoscopy?

An endoscopy is a procedure where the inside of your body is examined using an instrument called an endoscope.

An endoscope is a long, thin, flexible tube that has a light source and camera at one end. Images of the inside of your body are relayed to a television screen.

Endoscopes can be inserted into the body through a natural opening, such as the mouth and down the throat, or through the bottom.

An endoscope can also be inserted through a small cut (incision) made in the skin when keyhole surgery is being carried out.

When an endoscopy is used

An endoscopy can be used to:

- investigate unusual symptoms
- help perform certain types of surgery

An endoscope can also be used to remove a small sample of tissue for further analysis. This is known as a biopsy.

Investigating symptoms

An endoscopy might be recommended to investigate the following symptoms:

- difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- persistent abdominal pain
- chest pain that isn't caused by heart-related conditions
- persistent nausea and vomiting
- unexplained weight loss
- vomiting blood
- persistent diarrhoea
- blood in your stools

If the gullet (oesophagus), stomach or first part of the small intestine needs to be examined, it's known as a gastroscopy.

If the bowel needs to be examined, it's known as a colonoscopy.

Other types of endoscopies used to investigate symptoms include:

Bronchoscopy – used to examine the airways if you have a persistent cough or you're coughing up blood

Hysteroscopy – used to examine the inside of the womb (uterus) if there are problems such as unusual vaginal bleeding or repeated miscarriages

Cystoscopy – used to examine the inside of the bladder if there are problems such as urinary incontinence or blood in your urine

Endoscopic ultrasound – used to create images of internal organs, such as the pancreas, and take tissue samples

Therapeutic endoscopy - Modified endoscopes with surgical instruments attached to them or passed through them can be used to carry out certain types of surgery.

Laparoscopic surgery - A laparoscope is a type of endoscope used by surgeons as a visual aid when carrying out keyhole surgery (laparoscopic surgery).

Only small incisions are made during laparoscopic surgery, which means it's less painful afterwards and you'll recover more quickly.

Before having an endoscopy

Depending on what part of your body is being examined, you may be asked to avoid eating and drinking for several hours beforehand.

You may be given a laxative to help clear stools from your bowels if you're having a colonoscopy to examine the large intestine or a sigmoidoscopy to examine the rectum and lower part of the bowel.

In some cases, you may also need antibiotics to reduce the risk of an infection.

If you're taking a medicine to thin your blood, you may need to stop taking it for a few days before having an endoscopy. This is to prevent excessive bleeding during the procedure.

Don't stop taking any prescribed medicine unless your GP or specialist advises you to do so.

The endoscopy procedure

An endoscopy isn't usually painful, and most people only experience some mild discomfort, similar to indigestion or a sore throat.

The procedure is usually carried out while you're conscious. You may be given a local anaesthetic to numb a specific area of your body.

You may also be offered a sedative to help you relax and make you less aware of what's going on around you.

The endoscope will be carefully inserted into your body. Exactly where it's inserted will depend on the part of your body being examined.

What happens after your endoscopy?

After the endoscopy your images will be examined by a consultant who will prepare a report from the findings. Your diagnostic report will be sent to your referring GP or specialist within a few days of your endoscopy.



All enquiries:



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Important Information

This is a general patient information leaflet only.

The information you are given may be different to that provided here. This is because the information given to you is tailor made to your individual treatment.

It is very important that you follow the instructions that are given by your clinician.



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