Gastroscopy

You have agreed with your consultant doctor that you will shortly be undergoing a gastroscopy. This is an examination of the oesophagus, stomach and the first part of the small bowel. During this examination a flexible tube, an endoscope, will be introduced into the stomach via the mouth and oesophagus. At the end of the tube is an observation eyepiece, which allows the doctor to examine the mucous membrane of the oesophagus, the stomach and the beginning of the small bowel.

Preparations at home
- If you take blood-thinning medication such as Sintromitis (=acencoumerol), Marcoumar (= fenprocoumon) or Ascal (acetylsalicylic acid), you should contact the doctor who requested the examination. It is possible that you will temporarily have to stop taking the medication in question because of a potentially increased risk of bleeding.
- If you have diabetes and take medication for it, your medication may have to be modified. Discuss this with the doctor who requested the examination.
- The doctor who performs the examination may find it necessary to give you a sleeping pill. This is only done in exceptional instances. You should therefore arrange your transport back home after the examination.
- If your examination takes place in the morning, you must not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before. Your stomach must be as empty as possible for the examination. If you take medication, then you may do so with a little water.
- If the examination takes place in the afternoon, then at 9 o’clock in the morning you may have a cup of tea with a rusk. After that you must not consume anything at all until after the examination.
- You may not smoke after midnight prior to the examination. Nicotine irritates the mucous membranes, which can cause your stomach lining to appear inflamed.
- If in the unlikely event you are prevented from attending the examination, please inform the Endoscopy Department as soon as possible.

Preparations in the hospital
- Whenever you come to the hospital always bring your punched card as well as the application by your general practitioner or referring specialist. Ensure that the data on the punched card are correct.
- Report to the reception desk of the Endoscopy Department, route 18.
- In some cases the examining doctor may decide to administer a sleeping pill.
- You will be asked to get onto the examining table and to lie on your left side. If you have dentures, you should remove them. If you still have your own teeth, you will be given a teething ring to place between your teeth in order to protect the tube. The examination will be performed by a doctor assisted by two nurses.

The examination
The doctor will place the tube at the back of your throat and ask you to swallow. He will slide it gently into the stomach via the oesophagus, after which he will examine the stomach mucous membrane. All the while you can keep breathing normally. The doctor will pump some air through the tube into your stomach, oesophagus and the small bowel, which will smooth out the folds in them. This will enable the doctor to examine the mucous membrane in detail. The entire examination takes about five to ten minutes.
Any abnormalities detected by the doctor will be minor ulcers, inflammations, instances of bleeding and/or tumours. If necessary, the doctor will remove small specimens of tissue (i.e. take biopsies) for further examination. This is not painful.

**Following the examination**
After the examination your throat may be somewhat sensitive and you may have to expel some wind. Unless the doctor decides otherwise, you may eat and drink normally after the examination. You will mainly be encouraged to drink a lot of fluid the rest of the day.

If you have had a sleeping pill, you must remain in the post-examination ward for one or two hours following the examination, because of possible side effects. Due to the sleeping pill you will not be able to remember in detail what was discussed with you following the examination. It is therefore advisable that you bring your partner, another family member or a friend with you. They can then be at your side when you are told how the examination went and afterwards make sure you get home safely. If you have taken a sleeping pill you may not be in charge of a vehicle for the rest of the day.

**Complications**
Gastroscopies are in general safe, and complications occur only rarely. Very occasionally, however, a patient can choke, as a result of which some stomach contents end up in the lungs. Patients who have been administered a sleeping pill before the examination can sometimes under-breathe. Choking sometimes results in an infection of the air tract or even pneumonia. Patients admitted in an emergency whose stomachs are therefore not empty have a higher risk of suffering such complications.

If the gastroscope does not pass through the throat easily, or if the oesophagus is narrowed, this can in very occasional instances result in a slight rupture in the oesophagus or stomach. The more procedures carried out during the examination, the greater the risk is that complications may arise. Nevertheless, complications only occur rarely.

If a patient has poor teeth, they could suffer damage from the teething ring. This only occurs very occasionally, and the hospital accepts no liability in this regard.

**Results**
In principle the examining doctor will let you know the results immediately after the examination. If biopsies are taken, you will obtain the result on your next visit to the outpatients department. Alternatively, your general practitioner will inform you.

**Questions**
If you have any questions about the examination, do not hesitate to put them to doctor or nurse before the examination is carried out. For urgent questions you can also contact the Endoscopy Department.

**Telephone numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rijnstate Hospital</td>
<td>088-005 68 00 (office hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endoscopy Department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach-Colon-Liver Specialist</td>
<td>088-005 88 88 (through the operator) (outside office hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident &amp; Emergency</td>
<td>088-005 66 80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>