



Gastroscopy Information

What is a gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy uses a special camera called a gastroscope – a long, thin flexible tube with a camera and light at the tip – which is passed through the mouth and into the oesophagus, stomach and first part of the small bowel. The gastroscope allows the specialist to perform a detailed examination, as well as perform procedures such as biopsies and removal of polyps.

Why do I need a gastroscopy?

Gastroscopy can detect inflammation, ulcers and abnormal growths. The procedure is used to look for cancer and can help to work out the cause for unexplained changes in bowel habits, abdominal pain, bleeding from the bowel, difficulty swallowing, nausea, vomiting and weight loss.

How is a gastroscopy performed?

A gastroscopy is usually performed under a light anaesthetic and is not painful. As a result, you will not be able to drive for 24 hours or operate machinery after the procedure is complete. You will need someone to drive you to and from your procedure.

A thorough inspection of the oesophagus, stomach and small bowel usually takes about 10 minutes. A sample of the bowel lining (biopsy) may be taken to allow a review of it under a microscope or polyps (small tissue growths) may be removed.

What are the risks of a gastroscopy?

Gastroscopy is a very safe procedure, and complications are rare when the procedure is performed by doctors who are specially trained in gastroscopy. A/Prof Chris Mills is currently the only advanced and interventional endoscopist working in Gippsland, with extensive training in all facets of diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy.

Very few people experience serious side-effects from gastroscopy. The most common side effect is bloating after the gastroscopy. Exceedingly rare complications of gastroscopy include tearing a small hole in the oesophagus, stomach or small bowel wall (perforation), bleeding, a failure to complete the procedure, an incorrect diagnosis, a missed lesion or complications of the anaesthetic. Please feel free to discuss any of these complications with your specialist if you would like more information prior to your procedure.

I am having a colonoscopy on the same day as my gastroscopy. What do I do?

Please follow the instructions for your colonoscopy on our factsheet entitled *Practical Considerations for Colonoscopy* which is enclosed. You do not need to do anything additional or different for the gastroscopy procedure.

I still have some questions. Where can I go?

For further information, please drop us an email at hello@gippslandspecialist.com, head to our website gippslandspecialist.com or reach out to our friendly Gippsland Specialist Group staff on (03) 5630 8800.