



Western Health  
and Social Care Trust

INFORMATION LEAFLET

## **GASTROSCOPY**

### **Advice before a gastroscopy**

**Where to attend: Endoscopy Unit,  
South Wing, Altnagelvin**

**Bring a list of your medication with you**

**Expect to be in the Unit for up to 4 hours**

**For queries contact 028 71296179**

**Extension 216910 or 216911**

Your doctor has requested that you have a Gastroscopy. This leaflet provides information on the procedure and aims to answer questions you may have.

### **Why do I need a Gastroscopy?**

A gastroscopy is carried out to investigate a variety of symptoms:

- Vomiting/vomiting blood
- Heartburn/indigestion
- Anaemia
- Difficulty swallowing
- Abdominal pain
- It is also used to check up on previous abnormalities(eg.Barrett's oesophagus, stomach ulcers)

### **What preparation is needed before the test?**

- You cannot eat or drink anything for at least 6 hours before your appointment time so that the stomach is empty and can be examined effectively and safely. If you have taken food or liquids your appointment could be cancelled.
- You will be offered a sedative injected into a vein (IV) and/or a local anaesthetic spray to numb the back of your throat during the procedure. If you have an IV sedative someone must be available to drive you home and stay with you for 24 hours. You cannot work during this time. You can drive home, go back to work and be on your own if after if you have throat spray only.

- If you are taking any of the following drugs please contact the unit on 028 71296179 Ext: 216910/216911. **Plavix (Clopidogrel), Warfarin, Dabigatran (Pradaxa) Rivaroxaban (Xarelto), Apixaban (Eliquis), Ticagrelor (Brilique), Prasugrel (Efient)**
- Please advise us if you have any allergies or infections.
- If you think you may be pregnant contact your GP and contact the unit.
- If you are the main carer for someone at home please ensure arrangements are made to look after that person.

### **How is a gastroscopy performed?**

A nurse will care for you during the procedure and a Doctor or Nurse Specialist will perform the procedure. Following a full explanation, you will be asked to sign a consent form, agreeing to have the procedure. We will answer any questions you may have before starting.

For the procedure you will be asked to lie on your left side. You will be asked to remove any dentures and glasses. A mouth guard will be placed in your mouth to protect your teeth. A flexible scope will then be inserted gently into your mouth and passed over your tongue to the back of your throat. The test can sometimes be a little uncomfortable. You can breathe normally throughout the procedure. The test will take about 3-5 minutes to complete. If small samples of tissue (biopsies) need to be taken then the test may take a little longer.

**A biopsy** is a small piece of tissue, which is removed through the scope using tiny forceps. This procedure is painless.

## What are the complications of gastroscopy?

As with every medical procedure, the risk must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure. A gastroscopy is an invasive procedure and therefore carries risk/complication.

- Bleeding from the biopsy site or from where a polyp has been removed (fewer than 1 in every 100 tests carried out). This usually settles on its own.
- A tear or damage to the lining (fewer than 1 in every 2000 tests carried out). The risk is slightly higher if a polyp has been removed. You may need an operation to repair any damage.
- A sore throat or abdominal soreness. These usually settle on their own.

### After your Procedure

You will be given time to rest after your procedure. You will receive a patient centred report and discharge information before you leave the department. The staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

If there are any concerns following the procedure please seek advice from our staff on the contact number below.

**Helpline number is: 028 71296179**  
Extension 216910 or 216911

Information contained in this leaflet does not replace professional advice from the healthcare team responsible for your care

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