



Gastroscopy patient information guide

This gastroscopy guide contains important information about your upcoming procedure, including fasting instructions, sedation, recovery, and what to expect before, during, and after your appointment at Moonee Valley Specialist Centre in Essendon.



Moonee Valley
SPECIALIST CENTRE

Gastroenterological and Related Care



What is a gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy, also known as an upper endoscopy, is a procedure that uses a thin, flexible instrument called a gastroscope to examine the lining of the oesophagus, stomach, and upper small bowel.

The gastroscope contains a small camera and light, allowing your specialist to assess the upper digestive tract in detail during the procedure.

A gastroscopy may be recommended to investigate symptoms such as:

- Reflux or persistent heartburn
- Vomiting or nausea
- Difficulty swallowing
- Abdominal pain
- Bleeding or unexplained iron deficiency
- Suspected coeliac disease or stomach ulcers

Gastroscopy can also help detect ulcers, inflammation, reflux disease, coeliac disease, infections, stomach cancer, oesophageal varices, and other abnormalities. Biopsies are often taken during the procedure for further testing.

Quick facts

Duration Approximately 15–30 minutes

Anaesthesia Sedation is usually required

Fasting No food or drink, including water, for at least **6 hours before the procedure**

Recovery Recovery monitoring required after sedation

Results Preliminary findings may be discussed on the day

Important things to remember

- Your stomach and upper bowel must be completely empty before the procedure.
- Follow all fasting instructions exactly as provided by your specialist.
- Inform our team about all medications, allergies, and medical conditions before your procedure.
- Wear warm, loose, comfortable clothing to your appointment.
- Arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home afterwards.
- Avoid driving, alcohol, important decisions, work, or operating machinery until the following day.
- Tell your doctor before booking if you think you may be pregnant.

Preparation steps

• Day before procedure

Do not eat or drink anything, including water, for at least 6 hours before your scheduled procedure time. If you take prescription medications, inform your doctor beforehand so they can advise whether any adjustments are required before your gastroscopy.

• Day of procedure

Wear comfortable clothing and bring your Medicare card, referral, medications, healthcare documents, and payment method. You are welcome to bring reading material, an iPad, or headphones for entertainment during waiting periods.

What to expect

A gastroscopy is performed using a thin flexible tube called a gastroscope, which is gently passed through your mouth and into the upper digestive tract.

The procedure allows your specialist to examine the lining of the oesophagus, stomach, and upper small bowel for inflammation, ulcers, bleeding, polyps, reflux-related changes, or other abnormalities.

Biopsies may be taken during the procedure for further assessment. In some cases, treatments such as variceal banding or Botulinum Toxin injections may also be performed if clinically required.

During the gastroscopy

You will receive sedation to help keep you comfortable throughout the procedure. The gastroscope is carefully guided through the upper digestive tract, with images displayed on a monitor in real time.

Most procedures take approximately 15–30 minutes, followed by recovery monitoring.

After the gastroscopy

You will rest in recovery as the sedation wears off. Mild bloating, throat discomfort, or drowsiness may occur temporarily and usually settle quickly.

Preliminary findings may be discussed before discharge, though biopsy or pathology results may take several days to return.

You must have someone drive you home after the procedure and remain with you for the rest of the day.

Risks and safety of gastroscopy

- Gastroscopy is generally safe when performed by experienced specialists in a controlled clinical setting. However, as with any medical procedure, there are some risks and potential complications to consider.
- Possible risks may include bleeding, infection, reactions to sedation, aspiration, temporary throat discomfort, or, rarely, perforation of the digestive tract. Additional procedures such as biopsies or variceal banding may carry specific risks, which your specialist will explain before treatment.
- Carefully following fasting instructions helps reduce the risk of complications and supports clear visibility during the examination.

STOP eating and drinking, including water, at least 6 hours before your procedure unless instructed otherwise by your specialist.



Need to reschedule or have questions?

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