



1. What is an Upper GI Endoscopy?

An upper gastrointestinal (GI) endoscopy, also known as a gastroscopy, is a procedure used to examine the lining of the oesophagus (food pipe), stomach, and duodenum (the first part of the small intestine).

It is commonly performed to investigate symptoms such as difficulty swallowing, nausea, vomiting, reflux or heartburn, indigestion, abdominal pain, bleeding, or chest discomfort.

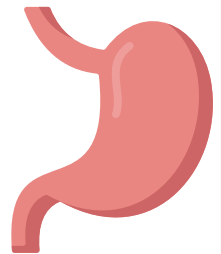
During the procedure, Dr Sivasuthan uses an endoscope, a long, thin, flexible tube with a small camera and light at its tip. The endoscope is gently passed through the mouth and guided down the oesophagus into the stomach and duodenum, allowing clear images of the digestive tract to be viewed on a monitor. Air or carbon dioxide may be introduced to improve visibility, which can sometimes cause temporary bloating or pressure.

The endoscope can also be used to perform treatments if required. This may include taking biopsies (small tissue samples) for laboratory testing, removing small growths, or treating areas of bleeding.

During the procedure, you will lie on your left side while the lining of the oesophagus, stomach, and duodenum is carefully examined as the endoscope is advanced and withdrawn. The endoscope does not interfere with breathing.

The procedure itself usually takes about 10–15 minutes, although the total visit typically takes two to three hours to allow time for preparation and recovery.

If abnormal areas are identified, biopsies may be taken and sent to a pathology laboratory for analysis. The procedure may be performed with sedation administered by an anaesthetist to ensure comfort during the examination.



2. What are the risks?

In recommending the procedure, Dr Goutham Sivasuthan believes that the benefits to you from having the procedure exceed the risks involved. There are risks and possible complications associated with the procedure which can occur with all patients – these are set out below. There may also be additional risks and possible complications specific to your condition and circumstances which Dr Goutham Sivasuthan will discuss with you. If you have any further concerns, please ensure that you raise them with the Dr Goutham Sivasuthan prior to giving consent to the procedure.

Risks of the Procedure

As with any medical procedure, there are potential risks and complications associated with endoscopy and sedation. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Common side effects may include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Light-headedness or dizziness, particularly when first getting up after the procedure
- Headache
- Pain, redness, or bruising at the site where sedation medication is administered (usually in the hand or arm)
- Temporary muscle aches or general discomfort
- Allergic reactions to medications given during the procedure

Less Common Risks and Complications

Less common complications may occur during or after an upper gastrointestinal endoscopy. These may include:

- Bleeding, particularly if a lesion or polyp is removed. In most cases, bleeding is minor and can be controlled during the procedure using the endoscope. Rarely, further treatment or surgery may be required.
- Heart or lung complications, such as cardiac events or aspiration of stomach contents into the lungs, which may lead to pneumonia and require urgent treatment.
- Damage to teeth, dental work, or the jaw, related to the presence of instruments in the mouth during the procedure.
- Worsening of an existing medical condition, which may occur as a result of the procedure or sedation.

Rare Risks and Complications

Rare complications may include:

- Missed polyps, growths, or abnormalities, despite careful examination.
- Perforation (a tear or hole) in the oesophagus, stomach, or duodenum. This may allow digestive contents to leak into surrounding areas and may require hospital admission and possibly surgery.
- Incomplete procedure, where the examination cannot be completed due to anatomical factors or technical difficulties.
- Bacteraemia, which is an infection in the bloodstream that may require treatment with antibiotics.
- Temporary nerve irritation or pressure injury, sometimes described as a “dead arm” sensation due to positioning during the procedure. This usually resolves over time.
- Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to medications administered during the procedure.
- Death, although this is extremely rare.

Sedation

Sedation involves the use of medications that help you feel relaxed and drowsy during a procedure. It is commonly used to improve comfort during procedures that might otherwise feel unpleasant. With sedation, most patients feel calm and sleepy, and many remember little or nothing about the procedure afterwards.

Sedation and anaesthesia are generally very safe. However, as with any medical treatment, there are potential side effects and complications. Most of these are temporary and resolve quickly, although in rare cases they may be more significant. Your individual level of risk may depend on several factors, including:

- Personal factors such as smoking or being overweight
- Existing medical conditions, including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, or other significant health issues