

Gastroscopy

What to expect



Information Guide

Gastroscopy

This guide provides information for Medibank Private Members and their families about gastroscopy.

It is important that you're well prepared for your healthcare experience, and know what to expect at key stages prior to, during and following this procedure.

It is also important that you discuss your particular circumstances in detail with the healthcare professionals who will be treating and caring for you. You should be confident in the treatment choices you make with your health care team and ensure that they are aware of your individual needs.

The information provided is for general information purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Medibank Private does not recommend or endorse any advice, doctors, other health care providers, products, tests, procedures or other general information mentioned in this booklet. Reliance on any information provided by Medibank Private is done so at your own risk and Medibank Private takes no responsibility for any injury, loss, damage or other consequences that may result from the use of this information.

The information in this booklet does not represent which products or services may be covered under your level of Medibank Private cover. Further, Medibank Private does not pay Benefits for a number of products and services e.g. doctor consultations when not admitted to hospital.

As a member of Medibank Private, your entitlement to Benefits will depend on your type (hospital and/or extras) and level of cover and is subject to our Fund Rules and policies. Premium rates, Benefits and the Fund Rules and policies are subject to change from time to time. A copy of our Fund Rules is available at our Retail Centres or at medibank.com.au.

Call us on 13 23 31 before you go to hospital to find out what you're covered for, any likely additional costs you may have to pay as well as for any other advice you may need.

The information provided in this brochure is current at the time of issue, July 2008.

Gastroscopy

What is a gastroscopy?

A gastroscopy is a procedure which enables a specialist doctor to see inside your oesophagus (pipe that leads to the stomach), stomach and duodenum (small intestine), using a flexible tube-like instrument that can be viewed using a microscope or on a television monitor.

The procedure allows the doctor to take tissue samples for pathology testing, and polyps may also be removed during the gastroscopy.

Why is a gastroscopy performed?

In most cases, a gastroscopy is performed to assess persistent upper abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting or difficulty in swallowing. The procedure can also help identify the cause of bleeding in the upper gastrointestinal tract, and may be used as a screening tool when there is a family history of stomach cancer.

Referral to a specialist

A gastroscopy is a specialised procedure usually performed by a gastroenterologist. Your GP should refer you to a suitable specialist.

As well as advice from your GP, you may wish to know more about the procedure and what you can expect from your specialist. The Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA) is Australia's peak body for the discipline of gastroenterology. Their website www.gesa.org.au is an online resource for consumers seeking further information.

Cost of treatment may also be an important consideration when selecting a specialist. A list of gastroenterologists who have participated in Medibank Private's GapCover Scheme in the past can be found on our website medibank.com.au

Note: Specialists can choose to participate in GapCover on a **case-by-case** basis.

More information about GapCover can also be found on our website or in our *'Going to Hospital'* brochure.

What should I discuss with my doctors?

- discuss the treatment options for your condition and why gastroscopy is being recommended
- ask what the possible outcomes are for each of the options you have discussed
- ask what is the likelihood of each of these outcomes occurring
- why your doctor has recommended a particular specialist in your case
- what experience does the specialist have, for example number of gastroscopies performed and outcomes for patients, including complication rates
- possible risks and outcomes associated with the procedure
- when any pathology results will be known
- typical recovery time
- arrangements for getting home and after care
- possible further treatment

Ideally you should make sure that you fully understand the procedure that is going to be performed. Your specialist should explain in detail how the gastroscopy is done, and what preparation you should make. Your doctor may provide you with written material to read at home.

Your Medibank Private *'Going to Hospital'* booklet contains some questions that you may wish to ask your doctor when considering gastroscopy including information on obtaining informed financial consent.

Where is it done?

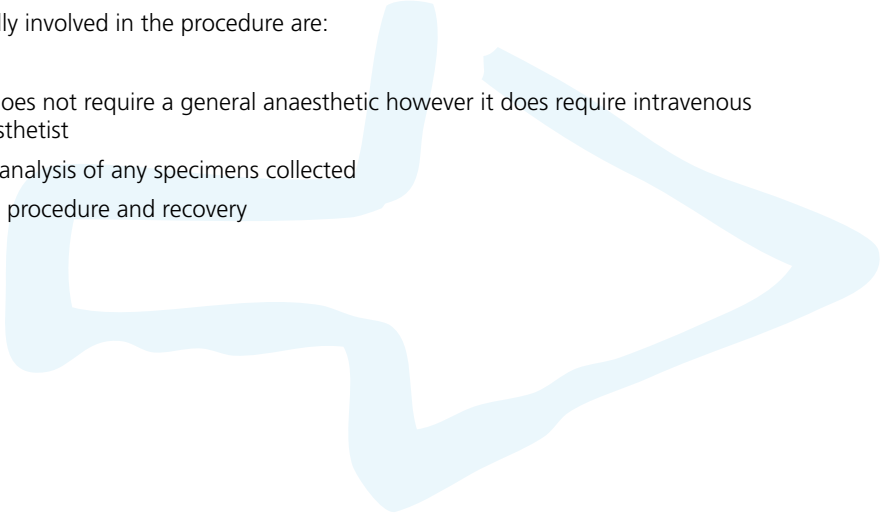
A gastroscopy is performed in either a day surgery or a hospital.

How long will it take?

Time required for the gastroscopy will vary with individual circumstances, but typically takes approximately 15 minutes with 1-4 hours recovery time following the procedure.

Who is involved?

Healthcare professionals usually involved in the procedure are:

- your gastroenterologist
 - anaesthetist. Gastroscopy does not require a general anaesthetic however it does require intravenous sedation given by the anaesthetist
 - a pathologist may conduct analysis of any specimens collected
 - nurses will assist during the procedure and recovery
- 

How to prepare

Your specialist should provide detailed advice on the preparation required in your particular case, but in general:

- you will need to fast, that is have nothing to eat or drink, for six hours prior to the procedure
- you should obtain medical advice about taking prescribed medications prior to the procedure

What happens on arrival at the day surgery or hospital?

When you arrive at day surgery or hospital, you will be admitted. Necessary paperwork will need to be completed.

Prior to the procedure your specialist will ask you to sign a consent form, indicating that you give him or her permission to perform the procedure and that you understand all potential risks and complications.

What to expect during the gastroscopy

Following admission, you will be taken to the procedure room and prepared for the gastroscopy. An anaesthetist may see you during this time. Preparation includes giving a local anaesthetic spray to numb your throat and a sedative injection to make you drowsy.

Once the sedative takes effect, your specialist will insert the gastroscope through your mouth and conduct the examination. Because of the sedative, you will barely feel the thin flexible tube of the gastroscope. Most people do not remember the procedure at all.

What happens after the gastroscopy?

You will wake up in a recovery area and will generally be asked to rest until the effects of the anaesthetic have worn off. It is possible to have a sore throat for a day or two following the procedure.

You should arrange for a friend or relative to accompany you when you leave as you should not drive yourself home after the procedure. The day surgery or hospital should give you specific instructions about any side effects you may experience once home and any symptoms for which further assistance should be sought.

Your specialist may inform you of the examination results or probable findings prior to your discharge from the recovery area. As pathology results usually take three to four days, in these cases your specialist may give you a presumptive, rather than a definitive diagnosis, prior to your discharge along with recommendations for follow up as required.

Further information:

Australian consumer information about gastro-intestinal procedures:

<http://www.gastro.net.au/investigations.html>





Phone

13 23 31

Email

ask_us@medibank.com.au

Visit Us

medibank.com.au

Write To Us

Medibank Private GPO Box 9999, in your capital city

Contact Us

Call us on 13 23 31 or visit medibank.com.au for your nearest Retail Centre

The information contained in this brochure is current at the time of issue, July 2008, and supersedes all previously published material.
Medibank Private Limited ABN 47 080 890 259. MPLM17331107