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What is Endoscopy?

An **endoscope** is a tube through which a physician may examine the interior of a body organ or cavity.

The original endoscopes were rigid tubes with a light, a lens system and an eyepiece. Modern instruments are thin and flexible, and project the image onto a television screen.

Using a channel that runs through the endoscope, additional instruments may be passed into the body with great precision. These instruments permit taking tissue samples (biopsy), taking fluid samples, removing small growths completely, controlling bleeding, and performing other types of treatment, all under direct visualization. Photographs and video tapes may be taken as well.

Upper gastrointestinal endoscopy, also known as **esophagogastroduodenoscopy** (or **EGD** for short), permits a direct visual examination of the upper portion of the gastrointestinal tract. Upper endoscopy is more accurate than barium x-rays in the evaluation of upper abdominal pain, indigestion, nausea, vomiting, heartburn, inability to eat, bleeding, suspected ulcer, possible cancer, or disorders of swallowing.

A topical anesthetic may be used to numb the mouth and throat, and usually a mild sedative is given intravenously. The tip of the instrument is inserted through the mouth, and then advanced into the esophagus, the stomach and the uppermost portion of the small intestine (duodenum).

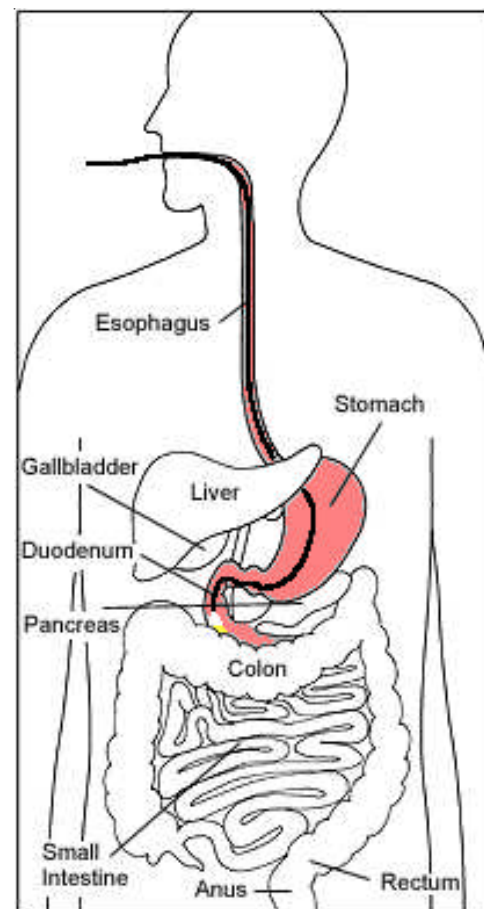
Visual inspection is often sufficient to make a diagnosis: for example, in cases of esophagitis, gastritis or peptic ulcer. Any abnormality or suspicious lesion may be biopsied. Small growths, such as polyps, or swallowed foreign bodies may be removed entirely. Bleeding ulcers may be cauterized, or bleeding blood vessels may be injected or banded to promote control of bleeding. Narrowed areas, for example in the esophagus, may be stretched open to permit normal function. Obstructions caused by tumors may be kept open by the placement of special tubes called stents.

The procedure typically takes 10-20 minutes, however your total stay at the endoscopy center will also include time

to check in, placement of an IV line, administration of sedation, and time to observe you after the procedure.

There is no special preparation for upper endoscopy, although you will be instructed not to eat or drink for several hours beforehand. You will need to bring an adult with you to drive you home. Notify your physician if you are taking any medications which may promote bleeding, or if you have any special condition which would require the administration of antibiotics before the procedure.

Endoscopy is considered safe; complications such as bleeding, infection or injury to internal organs are very rare.



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