Gastroscopy/OGD & Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

This leaflet explains more about your gastroscopy/OGD and flexible sigmoidoscopy and how to prepare for these procedures, including when to stop eating, how to cleanse your bowel and what medications you may need to stop. It also covers what you can expect when you come to hospital. It is important to read the enclosed Consent Forms to ensure that you are fully prepared for the procedure

These procedures are booked at one of our three endoscopy sites: The Endoscopy Unit at St George's Hospital, the Day Case Unit at Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton or the Nelson Health Centre. Please refer to your appointment letter / text for the location of your procedures.

Important information about your procedure

- St George's is a University Hospital and a National Training Centre for endoscopy, providing specialist training for qualified doctors and nurses developing skills in endoscopy. As part of this training, supervised specialist trainees may be involved in your care. If you would prefer trainees not to be present, please inform the doctor or nurse when you are admitted.
- These procedures are usually well tolerated without sedation, however if you are planning to have sedation, arrange for a friend or relative (18+) to escort you home after your appointment and be with you for at least 12 hours. We kindly ask escorts not to wait in the Endoscopy Unit due to limited space, but we will call when the procedure is completed.
- **STOP EATING SIX HOURS** before your appointment, clear fluids are allowed **(no milk)**.
- **STOP DRINKING CLEAR FLUIDS TWO HOURS** before your appointment.
- **IMPORTANT**: If you are taking **GLP-1 and/or GLP-3 and/or GIP blocker medication** e.g. Mounjaro, Wegovy, Ozempic, you will need to **STOP EATING** solid foods for **24 HOURS** before your appointment, and drink clear fluids only. **STOP DRINKING CLEAR FLUIDS TWO HOURS** before your appointment. Please follow the instructions on page 3 to ensure your stomach is empty.
- You will need to **self-administer an enema**, at least an **hour before** leaving home for your appointment. The enema makes you go to the toilet to empty your lower bowel. Please read the instructions on how to give the enema on pages 3 and 4.
- Please read and bring your signed **Consent Forms** with you to your appointment.
- We recommend you bring a book or magazine with you to read whilst you are waiting as the mobile phone signal is weak.

Important information about medication

- If you are taking medications for **diabetes** or to **prevent blood clots** such as Warfarin, Apixaban, Edoxaban, Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor or Prasugrel, please follow the instructions provided by the nurse. If you have not been contacted, please **contact us** on the numbers on page 6.
- If you are taking medications for your stomach e.g. Omeprazole (Losec), Lansoprazole (Zoton), Pantoprazole (Protium), Esomeprazole (Nexium) or Famotidine, you may continue taking it, unless advised to stop by your referring doctor.
- 7 days before the procedure, stop taking iron tablets.
- If you a diabetic, please bring your medication and a snack to eat after the procedure.
- If you take **GLP-1 and/or GLP-3 and/or GIP blocker medication** e.g. Mounjaro, **please inform us.**
- Take all other medications as usual.
- Please bring a list of your regular medications and bring any inhalers or sprays with you.
- If you a diabetic, please bring your medication and a snack to eat after the procedure.

What is a gastroscopy and flexible sigmoidoscopy?

A gastroscopy, also referred to as an OGD (Oesophago-Gastro-Duodenoscopy), is a camera examination of the stomach and flexible sigmoidoscopy is a camera examination of the lower bowel. These procedures are done consecutively at the same appointment for your convenience. They help to find the cause of your abdominal symptoms and to diagnose and sometimes treat diseases of the intestine. The procedures take 5 to 15 minutes each but please allow up to four hours in the hospital.

Before the gastroscopy, a local anaesthetic spray will be used to numb the back of your throat and reduce your gag reflex; this has a slightly bitter taste. The effect will wear off in 30 minutes. The gastroscope is gently inserted via your mouth into your stomach. This is not painful and will not affect your breathing, but it may be uncomfortable. The nurse may need to clear saliva from your mouth using a small suction tube. If you gag you won't vomit as your stomach will be empty. You may feel bloated from the air that is pumped into your stomach; this will be removed at the end of the procedure. Following this, the colonoscope will be inserted gently into your bottom. During the procedure, you may feel discomfort as if you want to go to the toilet and intermittent cramping. Sometimes a small tissue sample (a biopsy) is taken, or polyps are removed, this is painless.

The procedures can be done without sedation as they are both brief and well tolerated by many, but sedation or Entonox (also known as 'gas and air' or 'laughing gas') can be given on request. If sedation is requested, you will need to have an escort home and a responsible adult with you for at least 12 hours following your procedure. If you have Entonox, you will be able to go home 30 minutes after the procedure unaccompanied. Please note that Entonox is not suitable for all patients including those taking Methotrexate or with certain lung conditions or who have had certain eye/ear procedures. For more information about Entonox, go to:
www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-public/

For further information about the procedures, risks and alternatives please read the enclosed Consent Forms.

Asking for your consent and signing the consent form

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your care. Please take the time to read the Consent Forms before your appointment. If you feel happy that you understand what is involved and agree to have the procedures, please sign the Consent Forms, and bring them with you to the appointment. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions before the procedures. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously.

Advice for patients taking GLP-1, GLP-3 and/or GIP blocker medications e.g. Mounjaro, Wegovy, Ozempic medications

If you are taking medication such as Semaglutides (e.g. Wegovy, Ozempic, Rybelsus), Tirzepatide (Mounjaro) or Liraglutides, to manage diabetes, cardiovascular disease or weight loss, food moves more slowly through your gut and you therefore need to follow an extended fasting period to ensure your stomach is empty of food.

DO NOT EAT FOOD FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT. During this time, you should **DRINK CLEAR FLUIDS ONLY**. Stop drinking two hours before your appointment time.

Clear fluids include:

Water, fizzy drinks, Lucozade, squash (not red or blackcurrant), clear soups, Bovril or broth, black tea and coffee (no milk) and jelly (green and yellow only).

Advice for diabetic patients

The period of starvation can upset your diabetes temporarily. A nurse will contact you with advice on how to manage your diabetes whilst you are fasting. If you have not been contacted, please contact us on the telephone numbers on page 6 of this leaflet under **Contact us.** Alternatively, you may wish to speak to your diabetic nurse for advice.

How to use the Phosphate Enema

For this procedure to be successful, you will need to empty the lower part of your large bowel with an enema. The phosphate enema should only be given via your rectum (bottom). You will need to use the enema at least one hour before leaving home on the day of your procedure. The enema will have worked in the first hour, so after this time you should have no problem in getting to the hospital.

If you have not been provided with an enema, you can collect it from the endoscopy unit or purchase it from your local pharmacy. Please ask the pharmacist for a Phosphate enema for a flexible sigmoidoscopy. **Please note** that your pharmacist may need to order it in for you, so leave adequate time for this.

Alternatively, if you feel unable to administer the enema at home, this can be performed in the endoscopy unit. Please inform the booking office if this is the case as you will need to arrive earlier for your appointment so it can be administered.

Instructions on how to give the enema

1. **Have a plastic bag ready to dispose of the enema after use. Take the enema out of the box and remove the orange protective shield by pulling the shield gently while holding the bottle upright and grasping the grooved cap with your fingers.**
2. **You can use a little Vaseline or cooking oil to lubricate the tip if you wish.**
3. **Lie down close to the toilet, for example in a nearby bedroom. Lie on your left side if possible. You may like to lie on a towel. Draw your knees up towards your chest. See Figure 1 on page 4.**



Fig. 1

4. **With steady pressure, gently insert the enema tip into your bottom (anus) with the tip pointing towards your navel. Insert as much of the tube as you can comfortably.**
5. **Gently squeeze the bottle until nearly all the liquid has been emptied. Stop squeezing if you feel any resistance. It is common for a small amount to remain in the bottle.**
6. **Remove the nozzle from your bottom. It is normal to experience some leakage of the enema liquid.**
7. **Remain lying down and try to hold the liquid inside you for as long as you can before going to the toilet (up to 10 minutes if possible). The urge to evacuate your bowel usually passes within 2 to 5 minutes.**
8. **Put the used enema in a plastic bag for disposal and wash your hands.**
9. **If you do not get the desired effect, please still attend the hospital for your appointment as your bowel may have been mostly empty before you used the enema. A second enema can be given in the unit if required.**

On arrival at the endoscopy unit

- A nurse will check your details, including health history, medications and allergies.
- You will have the opportunity to ask any final questions with the endoscopist before the procedure. If you have not yet signed the forms, the procedures will be explained, and you will be asked to sign the Consent Forms.
- You will be asked to change into a gown and privacy shorts.
- If a home enema has not been possible, an enema will be given with the assistance of a nurse.
- If you have sedation, an intravenous cannula will be inserted and secured before the start of the procedure.

What happens after gastroscopy and flexible sigmoidoscopy?

Most patients can go home immediately after the procedures, however if you have had Entonox or sedation, you will be taken to the recovery area where you will be monitored for 30 to 45 minutes. After this you will be able to get dressed and have some refreshments. A nurse will give you a copy of the endoscopy reports as well as a discharge information leaflet with important advice. A normal diet can be resumed once the procedures are complete.

If you have sedation, you will not be allowed to drive and must arrange for someone to accompany you home. The medication given during the procedure will prohibit you from driving for 24 hours after the examination. Please do not take public transport home unless accompanied. If you are unable to arrange transportation, we can arrange a taxi to take you home, however you are responsible for the fare. You will need a responsible adult at home for at lease 12 hours. If you have had no sedation or Entonox, you can leave unaccompanied.

Will I get the results / Will I have a follow-up appointment?

We will give you a copy of the gastroscopy/OGD and flexible sigmoidoscopy reports and discuss the findings with you before you are discharged. We will be able to tell you of any visual findings, however any tissues samples will be sent to the laboratory for testing. This can take up to six weeks. A copy of the reports and any histology results will be sent to your referring doctor and your GP. If required, a follow up appointment will be requested and will be sent to you by post/text/or by phone.

Is there anything I need to watch out for after the procedures?

Minor side effects: It is normal to experience a mild sore throat for up to 48 hours following the procedure, simple lozenges will help. It is normal to notice small amounts of bleeding in your stool, or mild abdominal (tummy) discomfort, for up to two weeks after the procedure. These symptoms should usually settle within a few days, as should the consistency of your bowel motions.

When to seek urgent medical attention:
For up to two weeks following your procedure, if you develop any of the symptoms listed below, please seek medical advice **immediately** by EITHER contacting the St George's Endoscopy Unit, Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 6pm on 0208 725 1491/2310, OR outside of working hours by attending your nearest Emergency Department. Please ensure you **take a copy of your endoscopy report with you.** Additional information will be provided about procedural aftercare on the day of your appointment.

NOTE: If you attend an Emergency Department which is not at the St George's Hospital site, please still inform the St George's Endoscopy Unit of your attendance, by contacting us during normal working hours as above.

The symptoms to look out for include:

- Fever (>38°C) / Chills / Rigors
- Large amounts of blood or clots in your poo
- Severe, persistent or worsening abdominal, chest or neck pain

- Difficult breathing / shortness of breath
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Vomiting blood or ‘coffee ground’ material
- Black, sticky tar-like poo
- Fainting / Collapse

When can I get back to my normal routine?

You should be able to return to work and all your usual activities the same day, unless you had sedation, when it will be the following day. Please be advised you cannot drive, sign legal documents, or drink alcohol for 24 hours following sedation.

Where do I go?

Please see your appointment letter for the location of your appointment and the address below:

- **St George’s Hospital**, Blackshaw Road, London, SW17 0QT. Please go to the Endoscopy Unit, First floor, St James’ Wing (scan the QR code at the end of this leaflet for a map).
- **Queen Mary’s Hospital**, Roehampton Lane, London, SW15 5PN. Please present at the main reception and you will be directed to the Day Case Unit.
- **Nelson Health Centre,** Kingston Road, London SW20 8DA.
  Please present at main reception and you will be directed to the Endoscopy unit.

Parking at the hospital

At St George’s Hospital the car park entrance is located on Blackshaw Road. Queen Mary’s Hospital and the Nelson Health Centre each have a car park on site. Please ensure you check the rates before parking.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your procedure, please contact us.

- **For appointments at St George's Hospital or the Nelson Health Centre call:**
  The Endoscopy Unit on 020 8725 1913 Monday to Friday 8.30am to 3pm.

- **For appointments at Queen Mary's Hospital call:**
  The Day Case Unit on 020 8487 6466 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

We are sorry that you may experience a delay when contacting us by telephone. Our team manages more than 300 patient bookings each week and our phone lines can be extremely busy. At peak times, you may wait up to 40 minutes for your call to be answered.

Useful sources of information

For further explanation about gastroscopy Go to: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gastroscopy

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).
Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.
Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.
Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

Scan here for a map on how to find the Endoscopy Unit at St George's Hospital.

Scan here for a digital copy of this leaflet.

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This has been endorsed by the Patient Information Group PInG