

Patient information

Sedation and Anaesthesia During Endoscopy

Gastroenterology

Endoscopy and sedation

You have been advised to have an endoscopy. This is an examination of the inner lining of your stomach or bowel done by passing a thin flexible tube into your body through your mouth or anus.

The exact nature of the examination should have already been explained to you and you should be given an information sheet about the particular examination. Sometimes operations can be done by endoscopy, and this will be explained to you if it is relevant to your case.

Most patients tolerate endoscopy extremely well. Some examinations can be done with no sedation – a gastroscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy for example.

- For a gastroscopy- We recommend you have spray to the back of your throat of local or topical anaesthetic. This will numb your throat and may give you a sensation of having a lump in your throat. It does not affect your swallowing or you're breathing but allows you to tolerate the endoscopy better.
- For a flexible sigmoidoscopy-An examination of the first part of your large bowel through your anus (back passage), the procedure is short and most patients tolerate it well without sedation – you may have a little abdominal discomfort that feels like wind pain.

Almost all other types of endoscopy and any operations done by endoscopy will require sedation. There are a few drugs that we use commonly for this, midazolam, pethidine and Fentanyl. These drugs are given through a tiny plastic tube inserted into your vein.

Midazolam is a drug, which is like valium; you may be familiar with it. It acts for a short time and may make you sleepy – some patients fall asleep and remember nothing, others are nice and relaxed. Pethidine and Fentanyl are drugs, which are a bit like Morphine used to dull pain for some procedures.

Will I be awake during the endoscopy?

Sedation is not a general anaesthetic and you may feel awake during the procedure. Its purpose is to relieve any anxiety and help you relax, not to put you asleep.

Royal Liverpool Hospital and Broadgreen Hospital PIF 592 V9

Why can't I be asleep completely?

Sedation is safer than a general anaesthetic. All patients respond slightly differently to these drugs – some go very drowsy, others are quite awake but relaxed. As long as you are comfortable during the procedure, it will be safe to continue. We cannot give more than the recommended amount of these drugs in case of side effects.

What side effects can I have?

The drugs may affect your memory or concentration for up to 24 hours. Many patients remember nothing about the procedure or even what the doctor has said to them afterwards.

For these reasons you must have a friend or relative collect you from the unit and have a responsible adult to stay with you for 24 hours.

For next 24 hours you must not

- Travel alone.
- Drive any vehicle e.g. car, scooter or ride a motorcycle or bicycle.
- Operate machinery (including domestic appliances such as a kettle)
- Climb ladders.
- Make important decisions, sign any business or legal documents.
- Drink alcohol.
- Return to work within 12 hours of treatment. Your general health and any medicines you are taking may increase the time you need off work.
- You should
- Take it easy for the rest of the day, avoid strenuous activity.
- Take your medications as usual.
- Let someone else care for anyone you usually look after, such as children or elderly or sick relatives.
- Ensure that you have an adult escort to look after you for 24 hours.

Some patients can be oversensitive to the drugs used in sedation, which can cause problems with their heart or breathing. This is the main reason we do not give high doses of these drugs. We will also give you oxygen via a nasal cannula during the examination.

If you are worried about this and think you may be affected by sedation or are concerned that you might have problems with your heart or breathing, please tell your doctor or nurse before you have your procedure.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future. Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

If you have any questions or queries, please contact: The Gastroenterology Unit during the following hours

Monday – Friday 1000 – 1700hrs Tel: 0151 706 2720
Saturday/Sunday/BH 0800 – 1600hrs Tel: 0151 706 2726

Text phone number: Monday – Friday 18001 0151 706 2720
Saturday/Sunday/BH 18001 0151 706 2726

Endoscopy appointment queries Tel: 0151 706 2720
Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2720

The Emergency Department (A&E) is open 24 hours Tel: 0151 706 2049/2050.

Text phone number: 18001 0151 2049/2050

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