

What is Upper GI Endoscopy?

An Upper G.I. Endoscopy is an exam of the upper gastrointestinal tract. It looks at your throat down to the start of the small intestine.

This test gives your healthcare provider a detailed view of your whole upper digestive tract. It can help diagnose or treat any problems you may be having.

The digestive tract is the system in your body that takes in food, absorbs its nutrients, and gets rid of waste.

When food enters the upper part of your digestive system, it goes down your esophagus and into your stomach. There, acids and digestive juices mix it up and break it down.

The food then goes to the duodenum, the first part of the small intestine. In the small intestine, the food is broken down further and absorbed.

Your healthcare provider will use a long, thin flexible tube called a “video endoscope” to see inside your Upper Digestive Tract. Your provider can move the scope around curves for a full picture.

The endoscope has a tiny camera and light on one end. It sends images back to a video screen.

Your provider will watch the video screen to look for: inflammation (redness or irritation); ulcers; bleeding; polyps or growths; and other changes, including changes in the esophagus.

If your provider sees any problems, they can pass tools through the scope to fix damage or take tissue samples.

Your healthcare provider may advise an Upper GI Endoscopy if you have: Reflux symptoms (like a burning sensation in the throat or chest) or Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD); Barrett’s esophagus, a change in the lining of the esophagus; upper abdominal pain; anorexia and weight loss; trouble swallowing; persistent nausea or vomiting; upper GI bleeding; or anemia if an upper GI source is suspected.

You may also need one to: Screen for swollen veins in the esophagus and stomach if you have advanced liver disease such as Cirrhosis, remove foreign bodies, or place a feeding tube.

“The procedure is very safe; the risks are a sore throat...”

An endoscopy is a safe procedure. Complications are rare, but they can occur. They may include: perforation or tearing of the tissue being looked at; bleeding; aspiration, fluid going into the lungs; or reaction to the sedative medicine.

Make sure you tell your healthcare provider about any allergies you have, especially if you are allergic to any medicines.

Many people and healthcare providers feel the benefits of an endoscopy far outweigh the risks.

Having an Upper GI Endoscopy helps your healthcare provider find any problems in your upper digestive tract. You can then get treatment, if needed.