

Upper GI endoscopy

An upper gastrointestinal--or GI--endoscopy is a test that lets your doctor look at the inside of your esophagus and stomach, and the first part of the small intestine. Before the procedure, you probably won't be able to eat or drink for a short time.

You'll get medicine to prevent pain and to help you relax. You won't feel or remember the procedure. The doctor will put a thin, flexible tube, called a scope, in your mouth and gently move it down the throat into your stomach. You'll be able to breathe normally.

The doctor can check to see what's causing belly pain or trouble swallowing, or look for signs of problems, such as acid backing up into the esophagus or bleeding in the stomach. The doctor may also use the scope to take a sample of tissue to be tested, called a biopsy, or take out growths or stop bleeding.

The procedure usually takes about 15 to 30 minutes. Unless you need to stay in the hospital, you'll probably be able to go home after the medicines wear off, usually after 1 to 2 hours.

You'll need someone to drive you home. Your care team will let you know when you can drive again. After the procedure, you may be sleepy at first, and you may have a sore throat for a day or two.

But you should be able to go back to your normal activities the day after the test.