

Nasal gastroscopy - endoscopic examination of the oesophagus and stomach

Gastroscopy is an endoscopic examination of the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. Nasal gastroscopy is the newest and gentlest method. We use an ultra-thin scope of just 4.9 mm in diameter, inserted through a nostril and entirely bypassing the base of the tongue.

The examination gives a precise view of these organs and is used to clarify difficulty swallowing, stomach pain, heartburn and similar symptoms. We can also take painless tissue samples for microscopy and Helicobacter testing.

Difference between nasal and oral gastroscopy

The difference is not in what we see, but in how the scope reaches the stomach. In the classic oral gastroscopy a 9-10 mm scope passes over the base of the tongue - which is where the gag reflex sits. That is why oral gastroscopy is more often experienced as uncomfortable.

With nasal gastroscopy we bypass the base of the tongue entirely. The result is:

- **Significantly less gag reflex** - over 90 % of patients describe the examination as comfortable.
- **You can speak and breathe normally** throughout the examination.
- **Lower pulse and blood pressure** than with oral gastroscopy - less stress on the body.
- **The same diagnostic accuracy** - we see the same structures in the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum, and can take biopsies in the same way.

If there should not be enough room in the nose, we can pass the same scope through the mouth without any additional anaesthesia.

Anaesthesia

We numb the nose with a clear local anaesthetic gel (Xylocaine). Both nostrils are treated so we can choose the side with the best space. That is typically all the anaesthesia needed - the thin scope does not touch the base of the tongue, and the gag reflex stays away for the vast majority of patients.

Sedation is rarely needed and is only offered to particularly anxious patients. If you receive sedation you **must not drive or work for the rest of the day**.

Preparation

A full stomach cannot be examined:

- **No food** for 10 hours before the examination.
- **No drink** for 3 hours before the examination.
- Avoid large meals and especially dairy on the day of the examination.
- Essential medication may be taken with a glass of water.
- **Blood thinners** (Marevan, Eliquis, Xarelto and similar) must be agreed in advance.

How long does it take?

The examination itself usually takes **5 minutes, rarely more than 10**. Allow about 1 hour for the whole visit, including consultation, examination and a brief observation afterwards. You receive the result from the specialist immediately after the examination. If biopsies are taken, the final result is usually available after 1-2 weeks.

Step by step

- The nose is numbed with Xylocaine gel in both nostrils.
- You lie on your left side during the examination.
- The scope is passed through the nose. You are asked to swallow, and the scope slides easily into the oesophagus.
- Your mouth is free, so you can breathe, swallow and speak normally.
- A little air is blown into the stomach so we can see. This may cause an urge to burp.
- If there is no room in the nose, the scope is passed through the mouth without further anaesthesia.

After the examination

Because of the local anaesthetic in the throat there is a small risk of food and drink going down "the wrong way". After 20 minutes you may eat and drink again - start with a little water. You may drive and go to work for the rest of the day if you have not received sedation.

Is nasal gastroscopy dangerous?

Complications do occur, but in experienced hands they are so rare that there is no cause for concern. The typical issues are a mild nosebleed or throat irritation that resolves on its own.

Contact us

Phone +45 39 64 01 25 - mail@kirurgen.dk