

Upper Gi Endoscopy

What Is An Upper Gi Endoscopy?

An upper GI endoscopy, also known as an oesophagogastroduodenoscopy (OGD), is a valuable diagnostic procedure that enables doctors to examine the lining of the upper gastrointestinal (GI) tract, including the oesophagus, stomach, and the first part of the small intestine (duodenum). At Birmingham Liver Clinic, we use upper GI endoscopy to diagnose a range of digestive conditions, such as acid reflux, stomach ulcers, inflammation, polyps, and, in some cases, early signs of cancer. This procedure allows for a detailed view of the GI tract, often revealing abnormalities that may not be visible on X-rays or other imaging tests. In addition to providing accurate diagnoses, the procedure can sometimes allow for minor treatments to be performed in the same session, reducing the need for further testing and supporting personalised, effective treatment plans for our patients.

When Is Upper Gi Endoscopy Recommended?

An upper GI endoscopy may be recommended if you experience symptoms such as persistent heartburn, unexplained stomach pain, difficulty swallowing, or nausea and vomiting. It may also be advised if you have:

- **Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GORD):** To assess damage from chronic acid reflux.
- **Unexplained weight loss:** To investigate potential causes within the upper GI tract.
- **Anaemia or bleeding:** To identify sources of internal bleeding, such as ulcers or varices.
- **Abnormal imaging results:** To confirm findings from X-rays, CT scans, or other imaging tests.

By allowing for direct visualisation of the GI tract, an endoscopy can reveal valuable information about the underlying cause of your symptoms.

How To Prepare For An Upper Gi Endoscopy

To ensure accurate results and a safe procedure, your doctor will provide preparation instructions before your endoscopy. Generally, you will need to fast for 6 to 8 hours before the test, avoiding food and drink. Certain medications may need to be paused or adjusted, especially if you are taking blood thinners. Your doctor will advise on any specific preparations based on your medical history. It is recommended to arrange for someone to accompany you to the clinic, as sedation is typically used during the procedure, which may leave you feeling drowsy afterward.

What Happens During The Procedure

An upper GI endoscopy is usually performed as an outpatient procedure, meaning you can go home the same day. You will be given a sedative to help you relax, and your throat may be numbed with a spray to minimise discomfort. During the procedure, a thin, flexible tube with a light and camera (endoscope) is carefully inserted through your mouth and guided down your oesophagus, stomach, and duodenum. The camera transmits images to a monitor, allowing the doctor to examine the lining of these areas for any abnormalities. The procedure usually takes about 10 to 20 minutes.

If necessary, the doctor may take small tissue samples (biopsies) or perform minor treatments, such as removing polyps or stopping bleeding, during the endoscopy. You won't feel any pain during these steps, and biopsies are routine in diagnosing GI conditions.

Recovery After Upper Gi Endoscopy

After the procedure, you will be monitored in a recovery area until the effects of the sedative wear off. Most people feel well enough to leave within an hour, but it's important to have someone accompany you, as the sedative may cause temporary drowsiness. Mild symptoms like a sore throat, bloating, or gas are common but typically resolve within a day. You can usually resume normal activities the following day, though your doctor may recommend a soft diet initially.

Your doctor will discuss the results of the endoscopy with you, either immediately or during a follow-up appointment. If a biopsy was taken, the results may take a few days.

Benefits And Risks Of Upper Gi Endoscopy

An upper GI endoscopy provides a detailed look at the upper digestive tract, allowing for accurate diagnosis and, in some cases, immediate treatment of certain conditions. This can reduce the need for additional procedures and lead to quicker relief of symptoms. Although generally safe, the procedure carries minor risks, such as bleeding, infection, or perforation, which are rare. Your specialist will discuss these risks with you before the procedure.

Why Choose Birmingham Liver Clinic

At Birmingham Liver Clinic, we are committed to providing the highest quality care in digestive health. Our experienced team of specialists uses advanced endoscopic techniques to ensure accurate diagnoses and effective treatments. We prioritise patient comfort, safety, and support throughout the process, ensuring a smooth experience from start to finish.

Contact Us

To learn more about upper GI endoscopy or to schedule a consultation, please contact Birmingham Liver Clinic. Our team is here to help you understand your digestive health and receive the care you need.