

TRADITIONAL ENDOSCOPY

OVERVIEW

- An endoscope is a long, thin, lighted, flexible tube with a small camera attached that doctors use to examine the esophagus to screen for abnormalities.^{1,2}
- During endoscopies, fewer than 0.2%, or one person in every 500, experience complications.^{3,4}

PROCEDURE

- Doctors give patients sedatives intravenously to relax them and ease discomfort.^{1,2,5}
- Doctors spray patients' throats with numbing agents to prevent gagging and to relieve feelings of anxiety.^{1,2,5}
- Endoscope is inserted through patient's mouth and into the esophagus; the camera on the end of the endoscope is able to capture images of the esophagus.^{2,5}
- Doctors watch images on a TV monitor, looking for damage caused by diseases such as GERD, esophagitis, Barrett's esophagus, and esophageal cancers.^{1,3}
- Biopsies (tissue samples) are usually collected during the procedure.¹
- Procedure lasts about 20 to 30 minutes and is done in an endoscopy suite or hospital.¹
- Recovery may take two hours for sedatives to wear off; patients cannot operate a car after the procedure, typically cannot return to work that day, and may experience a sore throat for two days.^{1,2}

CONDITIONS THAT CAN BE DIAGNOSED

- Heartburn and GERD^{1,2}
- Bleeding in the GI (gastrointestinal) tract^{1,2,5}
- Swallowing difficulties^{1,2,5}
- Inflammations^{2,5}
- Tumors^{2,5}
- Esophagitis^{2,5}
- Stricture⁵
- Narrowing of the esophagus⁵
- Pre-cancerous conditions such as Barrett's esophagus⁶

BENEFITS

- Generally provides a more accurate examination than X-rays in the detection of inflammations and tumors of the esophagus.²

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Reactions to sedatives — cardiopulmonary complications⁷
- Bleeding in biopsy areas^{2,5}
- Continuing swallowing difficulties^{2,5}
- Worsening throat pain^{2,5}
- Fever^{2,5}
- Infection
- Tears or perforations through the wall of the GI tract

REFERENCES

1. <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/upperendoscopy>
2. http://www.sages.org/pi_egd.html
3. <http://my.webmd.com/hw/heartburn/hw267678.asp?lastselectedguid={5FE84E90-BC77-4056A91C-9531713CA348}>
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