WHAT IS A GASTROSCOPY?

A gastroscopy is an examination that allows a doctor to visualize the inner walls of your esophagus, your stomach and your duodenum. To carry out the examination, the doctor introduces the gastroscope, a small flexible tube the size of your little finger, through your mouth into your stomach. With the help of an optical fibre (a camera), the doctor can see images (which are also projected onto a screen) that allow him or her to conduct the examination.

The purposes of the examination

1. This examination enables the detection of anomalies on the walls of the esophagus, the stomach and the duodenum. It allows the confirmation or the elimination of a diagnostic hypothesis.
2. The doctor can proceed to a biopsy. A small instrument is introduced into the gastroscope to take a fragment of tissue, which may allow the confirmation of the presence of a bacterium responsible for chronic symptoms, or, in other cases, the sample taken will be sent to the regional hospital’s anatomopathology laboratory for analysis.
3. The examination can also be therapeutic:
   a. A foreign object can be removed.
b. A polyp can be excised (polypectomy).

c. Bleeding can be controlled, a varix ligature performed, a vessel can be cauterized, etc.

All these techniques are painless. In some cases, you may be administered a sedative to minimize the discomfort of the examination.

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PREPATORY DIET

The day before the examination
- Have a light supper.

If your examination is scheduled for the morning
- Fast completely beginning at midnight (no food, no liquid, except a mouthful of water if you have to take any medication).

If your examination is scheduled for the afternoon (after 12:30 p.m.)
- Fast completely beginning at 7:00 a.m. (no food, no liquid except a mouthful of water if you have to take any medication);
- Before 7:00 a.m. on the morning of the examination, you may have some water, juice, Jell-O, coffee or tea without milk.

One of the basic requirements is that your stomach be empty at the time of the procedure.

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MEDICATION

It is important to advise your doctor in advance if you have any of the following medical conditions:
- If you are allergic to any medications;
- If you take Coumadin, Plavix or any medication that thins the blood;
- If you suffer from diabetes.

It is also important to inform the person who calls you for your appointment if your medical condition has changed since the examination was prescribed.

Prepare a list of the medications that you are taking, and bring it with you to give to the staff on the day of your examination.

If you are diabetic: the morning of your examination, do not take your pills or your insulin. This is the reason that these examinations are given priority early in the morning. Mention it when you are called for your appointment.
Regularly taken medication: take your pills with a mouthful of water around 6:30 a.m. then fast completely after that.

Blood-thinning medication:

- Coumadin, Sintron: stop taking 5 days before the examination. Depending on the reason that Coumadin has been prescribed for you, an injectable blood-thinning medication can be prescribed in order to temporarily replace it. Check with your doctor to see if this is necessary;
- Plavix: stop taking 10 days before the examination.

Heart valves: an antibiotic can be administered to you on-site, before the examination.

PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THE HOSPITAL VISIT

You must be accompanied.
Find someone who will accompany you on the day of the intervention and who will take you back home. This person must stay throughout the examination, failing which the examination will be cancelled.

Jewellery and make-up
- Remove all jewellery and body piercings.
- Do not wear any lipstick or nail polish.

Personal effects
Have with you only a minimum amount of money and do not bring any item of value.

Up-to-date list of medications
Get this from your pharmacist.

UPON YOUR ARRIVAL AT THE HOSPITAL

Enter the hospital through the main entrance.
Go to the counter identified as “INSCRIPTION CHIRURGIE D’UN JOUR” (registration for day surgery).

Registering

Upon arrival, have in hand:
- VALID Medicare card;
- Green hospital card.

Reception at day surgery
1. Go to the First Floor of the hospital where the day surgery is to be found.
2. A nurse will receive you and fill in a medical questionnaire prior to your
examination. At this point, mention if you have any allergies to medications and if you are a carrier of a multiresistant bacteria (e.g. MRSA, VRE, C. difficile).

3. The nurse will go over the information received from your doctor concerning your examination.
4. The nurse will inform you about the consent form and ask you to sign it.

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DURING AND AFTER THE EXAMINATION

THE EXAMINATION

You will be asked to remove your glasses and dentures, if applicable. You will probably have a relaxant medication (sedative) injected intravenously. A bitter-tasting local anaesthetic in liquid form will be sprayed into your throat. (Any reaction experienced in the past at the dentist or during surgery must be reported to the nurse or doctor.)

You will be placed lying on your left side with your chin towards your chest in order to facilitate the doctor’s work.

The examination will last approximately 5 to 10 minutes. The doctor will start to slide the tube into your mouth. The feeling is unpleasant at the beginning but after a few moments you will be able to easily tolerate the presence of the tube, especially if you avoid coughing, swallowing or moving your tongue.

Once the tube is well placed, you will be asked to gently close your mouth and swallow the tube. This will be a bit difficult for you as your throat will be frozen. You will remain capable of swallowing, but you won’t be able to feel it.

The most unpleasant part of the examination is now over. Apart from a slight feeling of bloating due to the air blown in to distend your stomach, you may possibly feel a stomach cramp, which is perfectly normal. It is also normal to feel mild discomfort in the throat (irritation) for a day or two and to pass gas for several hours.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

Keep fasting (no eating or drinking) for 1 hour; as your throat is still frozen, you risk suffocating yourself.

If you had any relaxant medication (sedative), you will remain under observation in the day surgery department until the effects of the medication have dissipated (approximately 30 to 60 minutes).

You cannot drive your car after the examination. It is principally for this reason that you must be accompanied. Your judgment and reflexes may be affected for a period of 24 hours, and as a result you must also avoid signing any legal document for a period of 24 hours.

Before you leave, you will receive instructions regarding restarting your blood-thinning medication, if applicable.

Drinking alcohol within the first 24 hours after the examination is not recommended.
QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to speak to the doctor or the nurse in the day surgery department before you leave.

The risks associated with gastroscopy and the excision of polyps are low:

- One of the possible complications is a minuscule perforation of the stomach wall or bleeding following a biopsy or the excision of a polyp;

Consult the Info-Santé service by calling 811, 24 hours a day, in case of any of these situations, or if you have any questions.

- If you vomit up red or blackish blood, or if your stool becomes black.
- If, during the hours following the examination, you feel severe or acute pain in the throat, in your neck, your shoulder, your chest or your belly, accompanied or not by a temperature or vomiting.

The health professional will provide you with pertinent information and will direct you to the hospital if required by the situation.

REQUEST FOR AN UPPER GASTROINTESTINAL ENDOSCOPY

Gastroscopy (fasting)

1. within < 2 months
2. within > 2 months
3. discussed with Doctor:

Pertinent medical information:

Fax the reception service at 819-324-4075

IS THE PATIENT TAKING ANTICOAGULANTS OR ANY OTHER MEDICATION THAT AFFECTS COAGULATION?  YES  NO
CAN IT BE STOPPED  YES  NO

MUST BE STOPPED:
COUMADIN OR SINTROM – 5 DAYS BEFORE THE EXAMINATION
PLAVIX – 10 DAYS BEFORE EXAMINATION

IS THE PATIENT A CARRIER OF MULTIRESISTANT BACTERIA?  YES NO
IF YES, WHICH: MRSA  C. DIFFICILE  VRE  OTHER:
IS THE PATIENT DIABETIC?  YES  NO

Date  Doctor’s name  Doctor’s signature  Practice code
CHECKLIST

Date of your appointment:
Time:
Doctor:

I am prepared:
VALID Medicare card.
Green hospital card.
Up-to-date list of medications.
Someone to accompany me.
I have respected the preparation instructions regarding the taking of medications.
I have respected the fast (no eating or drinking).
I have removed jewellery and piercings and I am not wearing lipstick or nail polish.

Location
Laurentian Hospital
234 Rue Saint-Vincent
Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, Quebec J8C 2B8

I can’t make it to my appointment:
I will immediately call the day surgery registration at 819-324-4040

IMPORTANT: This measure is necessary in order to make the time allotted to you available to someone else, and will allow you to make another appointment.

Please note the new policy of the CSSS des Sommets regarding the MANAGEMENT OF THE UNAVAILABILITY OF PATIENTS REGISTERED ON THE WAITING LIST FOR SURGERY OR ENDOSCOPY

The patient who does not show up for a scheduled appointment
The patient who does not appear on the scheduled date for surgery or endoscopy will have his or her name removed from the waiting list. The request for the operation or the endoscopy will be sent to the referring doctor to have the need for the surgery or endoscopy re-evaluated, and a written notice of the procedure to follow will be sent to the patient.

The patient who cancels a scheduled appointment for surgery or endoscopy will be offered a new date for that surgery or endoscopy at the time of the cancellation call. If the patient cancels this appointment for a second time, the establishment advises the patient that his or her name will be removed from the waiting list, and will therefore require
another visit to the referring doctor in order to re-evaluate the need for the surgery or endoscopy, and the patient will receive a written confirmation of this step.

Surgical team
Centre de Santé et de Services Sociaux des Sommets
234 Rue Saint-Vincent – Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, Quebec J8C 2B8
819-324-4000

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Users’ Committee
We look after your rights!
We look after you!

The Users’ Committee is proud to support the creation of this information guide.

We inform you, we listen to you, we help you, we accompany you!
819-324-4000 ext. 4334 (voice mail)
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