Frequently Asked Questions About a Gastroscopy

1. How long does the examination take?
The gastroscopy exam takes usually between 3-5 minutes to perform.

2. Will it hurt?
Most people don’t find these exams painful. Gagging at the beginning of the exam is usually the most uncomfortable part. All patients have their throat sprayed with an anesthetic to minimize throat discomfort. Most patients are given medicine to make them sleep through the gastroscopy, so they don’t feel much. During this test, air is pumped into the stomach to keep it open.

3. How can I prevent the gagging?
A certain amount of gagging is expected but you can minimize it significantly by focusing on your breathing. It is important to focus on a slow and relaxed rhythmic breathing. It is also important not to swallow your saliva but rather to let it trickle out on the towel provided.

4. Will I be in a private room?
Gastroscopy is done in a private room in the endoscopy suite. The patient’s privacy is very important. Only the doctor and the assisting nurses will be present during the exam.

5. How will I feel afterwards?
Most people feel OK after a gastroscopy. You could feel a bit dizzy and tired from the sedatives. After the gastroscopy, nurses in the recovery room will watch you for about 1 hour. You might have some gas because of the air that was pumped into the stomach, which can cause cramping and discomfort. You will feel better once you let the gas out. Because of the medicines given for the test, you will need someone to take you home. You may have a sore throat for 1-2 days.

6. Can I drive home afterwards?
If you were sedated for the exam, you are not allowed to drive home. In fact, you are not allowed to drive for at least 8 hours afterwards.

7. What if they find something?
If your doctor sees anything abnormal, a biopsy will be done. The biopsy is sent to a pathology lab to be analyzed under a microscope.