

## **PATIENT INFORMATION FOR GASTROSCOPY**

### **WHAT IS A GASTROSCOPY?**

Gastroscopy is a procedure used to examine the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum (the start of the small bowel). Gastroscopy may involve the taking of small tissue samples (biopsy).

### **HOW ARE YOU PREPARED?**

Prior to the gastroscopy you will be provided with full instructions. You will need to fast for at least eight hours prior to the procedure, but required medications may be taken with a sip of water on the morning of the procedure. If you are a diabetic you will be given special instructions. The procedure will be performed with you comfortably sedated by a specialist anaesthetist.

### **WHAT DO WE DO?**

The gastroscope is a flexible tube about the thickness of your index finger. This tube contains a small camera, which transmits light, and images back to the doctor. It is inserted through the mouth into the oesophagus to allow inspection of the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum. The endoscope will not interfere with your breathing.

### **SAFETY AND RISKS:**

Complications of gastroscopy are rare and occur in approximately 1 in 2,000 examinations. Complications related to the anaesthetic drugs may occur but are rare. The endoscope may cause trauma to the mouth and throat and rarely dental damage may occur. Perforation (making a hole in the oesophagus or stomach) is a rarity but if it occurs, may require surgery. Death following anaesthetic or gastroscopy complications is extremely rare (reported to occur in approximately 1 in 20,000 examinations; mainly in elderly or frail patients with major coexistent illness). If you have any questions or reservations, please inform your doctor prior to the procedure. **Please advise if you are currently taking aspirin or warfarin.**

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

Radiological investigations (CT scan, ultrasound or barium meal) can be used to image the stomach. Whilst these investigations are associated with less risk than gastroscopy, they are generally less sensitive at detecting disease and don't allow taking of biopsies.

### **AFTERWARDS:**

Following gastroscopy you will be fatigued for the remainder of the day. You should allocate a full day for your procedure; i.e. don't plan to go back to work, attend social engagements, play sport or travel. You should be driven home by a relative or friend and have company for the remainder of the day. The sedation may result in forgetfulness for some hours. Mild throat discomfort and windy discomfort in the abdomen may occur in the hours following the procedure but if there is severe pain you should **contact Doctor Dowling immediately.**

You should be fit to resume normal work the day after your procedure. **Please note that a medical certificate will only be provided for a longer period of time in exceptional circumstances.**