



Your endoscopy: the patient journey

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1. Referral and booking

A GP or another clinician may refer you. I may arrange an investigation after seeing you in clinic. Some services accept self-referrals for selected tests. The service will review the referral and contact you about a suitable appointment.

2. Get ready

Follow the instructions sent for your own procedure. Tell the team about all medicines. Do not stop them unless instructed. If a blood thinner is withheld, your plan should say when to take the last dose and when to restart it. A blood test is only needed sometimes. Call the endoscopy team if you are unsure.

3. On the day and afterwards

The team will check your health, medicines, allergies and preparation, explain the procedure and answer your questions. Sedation is common but not used by everyone. If you have it, arrange the transport and support required by your service. Drowsiness may improve before your memory, judgement and reactions are back to normal. Follow your discharge instructions.

4. Findings and follow-up

Initial findings are often discussed on the day. Routine biopsy reports often take a few weeks, while urgent samples for a suspected serious problem are usually reported sooner. Extra tests or specialist review can take longer. I document recommended follow-up in the endoscopy report and/or histology report when tissue results are available. Please get in touch with me if you are unsure who will arrange the next step.

If you feel unwell

Use the after-care contact in your discharge information for severe or worsening abdominal pain, fever, ongoing or heavy bleeding, black bowel motions, persistent vomiting or other worrying symptoms.

Travel after endoscopy

Tell our team about travel plans before booking. As a practical precaution, allow two weeks between colonoscopy and overseas, long-haul or remote travel unless the team confirms a shorter interval is suitable. Polyps may be found and removed on the day. Delayed bleeding is one reason to stay within reach of medical care: it can occur several days after removal and up to two weeks later. After an uncomplicated diagnostic gastroscopy or colonoscopy, a two-week restriction is not usually needed once the findings are known. Allow at least 24 hours before flying after colonoscopy. After sedation, do not drive or travel independently for 24 hours, and arrange the support specified in your discharge instructions. Confirm your flight and any long journey with the team, especially after polyp removal, dilatation or other treatment.

Call 111 if you collapse, have severe symptoms or cannot travel safely.

