

What is **ENDOSCOPY** and why do you need it?

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As part of its constantly expanding level of services and equipment now offered locally, Frio Regional Hospital recently began offering endoscopy services in its newly-equipped facility through its partnership with Methodist Healthcare.

WHAT IS ENDOSCOPY?

An upper endoscopy is a procedure used to visually examine the upper digestive system with a tiny camera on the end of a long, flexible tube. A specialist in diseases of the digestive system (gastroenterologist) uses an endoscopy to diagnose and, sometimes, treat conditions that affect the esophagus, stomach and beginning of the small intestine (duodenum). The medical term for an upper endoscopy is esophago-gastroduodenoscopy.

WHY IT'S DONE?

An upper endoscopy is used to diagnose and, sometimes, treat conditions that affect the upper part of the digestive system, including the esophagus, stomach and beginning of the small intestine (duodenum).

Doctors may recommend an endoscopy

procedure to:

INVESTIGATE SYMPTOMS: The procedure helps doctors determine what's causing digestive signs and symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, difficulty swallowing and gastrointestinal bleeding.

DIAGNOSE: Doctors may use the procedure to collect tissue samples (biopsy) to test for diseases and conditions, such as anemia, bleeding, inflammation, diarrhea or cancers of the digestive system.

TREAT: A doctor can pass special tools through the endoscope to treat problems in the digestive system, such as burning a bleeding vessel to stop bleeding, widening a narrow esophagus, clipping off a polyp or removing a foreign object.

An endoscopy is sometimes combined with other procedures, such as an ultrasound. An ultrasound probe may be attached to the endoscope to create specialized images of the wall of the esophagus or stomach. An endoscopic ultrasound may also help the doctor create images of hard-to-reach organs, such as the pancreas. Newer endoscopes use high-definition video to provide clearer images.

Many endoscopes allow doctors to use technology called narrow band imaging, which uses special light to help better detect precancerous conditions, such as Barrett's esophagus.

HOW TO PREPARE

Doctors will provide specific instructions to prepare for the endoscopy. In some cases asking that patients to:

Fast before the endoscopy: You will need to stop drinking and eating four to eight hours before your endoscopy to ensure your stomach is empty for the procedure.

Stop taking certain medications: Patients need to stop taking certain blood-thinning medications in the days before the endoscopy. Blood thinners may increase the risk of bleeding if certain procedures are performed during the endoscopy. For patients with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease or high blood pressure, doctors will provide specific instructions regarding medications.

Patients should notify doctors about all the medications and supplements they are on before the procedure.

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