

How does an endoscopy work?

A gastroenterologist is a doctor who specializes in the gastrointestinal tract also known as GI. In order to diagnose GI health related problems, the doctor performs a non-surgical procedure to examine a person's digestive tract. This procedure is called an endoscopy. An endoscope is a thin, flexible tube with a light and a tiny camera on the end. During an upper endoscopy, the doctor inserts an endoscope into the mouth, down the throat, and into the esophagus to view the images on a screen for possible tumors or other GI problems. The doctor can also pass tools through a channel in the endoscope to remove detected tissue samples to look at the samples under a microscope.

How to get ready for an endoscopy?

To get ready for an endoscopy procedure, the patient should not eat or drink, including water, for up to 8 hours before the procedure. The stomach must be completely empty. In addition to that, the patient should not be taking aspirin or other over-the-counter pain medications for 7 days before the procedure as these medicines can increase the risk of bleeding during the procedure. A patient may be given anesthesia and a sedative through an intravenous (IV) needle in the arm. Anesthesia is medicine that blocks the awareness of pain. A sedative is medicine that relaxes the patient. Sedative medications help to reduce the discomfort during the procedure.