

# CottageHouseCall

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## ***GI Endoscopy: What it is and Why it's Used***

The gastrointestinal tract is something that many people take for granted until it causes pain or other problems. When the stomach and intestines are the source of pain, discomfort, or other symptoms, a doctor may use a gastrointestinal endoscope, or gastroscope to evaluate, diagnose, and treat the problem.

During this procedure, which often only takes about 20 to 30 minutes to perform, a doctor inserts a long, thin tube with a tiny light and video camera attached to it, through the mouth, down the throat and through the digestive tract to diagnose or treat problems. A gastroenterologist can guide the endoscope while watching a clear and detailed view of the upper gastrointestinal tract on a TV monitor. Though a local anesthetic and a mild sedative may be used, the patient is able to breathe normally throughout the procedure, allowing the doctor to see the inner workings of the stomach and digestive system including the upper part of the lower intestine.

Gastrosopes are used to find the cause of infection, gastroesophageal reflux disease, ulcers, and cancer. If anything looks suspicious, the doctor can use the endoscope to take a small tissue sample for biopsy without additional procedures.

If the doctor finds that the procedure is necessary, the patient must follow several guidelines. Food in the stomach could potentially block the view through the endoscope or cause vomiting so patients must refrain from eating or drinking in the eight to 10 hours directly before the procedure.. The patient also may be asked to stop taking aspirin or iron supplements in the week prior to the test because these medications are blood thinners, which could be a problem in the event of light scraping or bleeding.

Gastrosopes are a good way to determine the health status of the gastrointestinal tract without surgical procedures, which involve more recovery time. A gastrointestinal endoscopy takes only a short period of time and is usually a safe outpatient procedure. It is important for the patient not to drive home after the procedure because of the sedative.

To make an appointment with Mark Davis, M.D. FACS, call 343-7773.

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