An upper endoscopy is an exam of your esophagus (food pipe), stomach, and the first part of your small intestine. During your upper endoscopy, your doctor will use a flexible tube called an endoscope to see the inside of your esophagus, stomach, and small intestine on a video screen.

Your doctor can take a small sample of tissue (do a biopsy) or remove a polyp (growth of tissue) during your procedure.

1 Week Before Your Procedure

Ask about your medications
You may need to stop taking some of your medications before your procedure. Talk with your doctor about which medications are safe for you to stop taking. We have included some common examples below.

Anticoagulants (blood thinners)
If you take a blood thinner, such as to treat blood clots or to prevent a heart attack or stroke, ask the doctor who prescribes it for you when to stop taking it. See below for examples of common blood thinners.
Common anticoagulants (blood thinners)

- apixaban (Eliquis®)
- cilostazol (Pletal®)
- clopidogrel (Plavix®)
- dalteparin (Fragmin®)
- enoxaparin (Lovenox®)
- fondaparinux (Arixtra®)
- heparin
- rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)
- tinzaparin (Innohep®)
- warfarin (Coumadin®)

There are others, so check with your doctor if you’re not sure.

Medications for diabetes
If you take insulin or other medications for diabetes, you may need to change the dose. Ask the doctor who prescribes your diabetes medication what you should do the day before and the morning of your procedure.

If you take metformin (such as Glucophage® or Glumetza®) or a medication that contains metformin (such as Janumet®), don’t take it the day before or the day of your procedure.

Tell your doctor if you have an AICD
Tell your Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) doctor if you have an automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD). If you have this device, you will need to have your procedure done at Memorial Hospital (MSK’s main hospital).

Get a letter from your doctor, if needed

- If you have an AICD, you will need to get a clearance letter from your cardiologist (heart doctor) before your procedure.
• If you’ve had chest pain, dizziness, trouble breathing that’s new or worse, or have fainted in the last 6 weeks, you will need to get a clearance letter from your doctor before your procedure.

Your MSK doctor’s office must receive your clearance letter at least 1 day before your procedure.

**Arrange for someone to take you home**
You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don’t have someone to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They will send someone to go home with you. There’s usually a charge for this service, and you will need to provide transportation.

**Agencies in New York**
Partners in Care: 888-735-8913
Caring People: 877-227-4649

**Agencies in New Jersey**
Caring People: 877-227-4649

**3 Days Before Your Procedure**
An endoscopy nurse will call you between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM 3 days before your procedure. They will review the instructions in this guide with you and ask you questions about your medical history. The nurse will also review your medications and tell you which medications to take the morning of your procedure.
The Day Before Your Procedure

Note the time of your procedure

A staff member from the hospital or site you’re having your procedure will call you after 11:00 AM the day before your procedure. The staff member will tell you what time you should arrive at the place for your procedure. If you’re scheduled for your procedure on a Monday, you will be called on the Friday before. If you don’t receive a call, call your doctor’s office.

If you need to cancel your procedure, call the doctor who scheduled it for you.
Instructions for eating and drinking before your procedure

- Do not eat anything after midnight the night before your procedure. This includes hard candy and gum.
- Between midnight and up until 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, you may drink a total of 12 ounces of water (see figure).
- Starting 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, do not eat or drink anything. This includes water.

The Day of Your Procedure

Things to remember

- Take only the medications your doctor told you to take the morning of your procedure. Take them with a few sips of water.
- Don’t put on any lotion, cream, powder, makeup, perfume, or cologne.
- Remove any jewelry, including body piercings.
- Leave valuable objects (such as credit cards and jewelry) at home.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead.
What to bring

- A list of the medications you take at home, including patches and creams.
- Your rescue inhaler (such as albuterol for asthma), if you have one.
- A case for your glasses.
- Your Health Care Proxy form, if you have completed one.

Where to go

Your upper endoscopy will take place at one of these locations:

- **Endoscopy Suite at Memorial Hospital (MSK’s main hospital)**
  
  1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)
  
  New York, NY 10065
  
  Take the M elevator to the 2nd Floor. Enter the Endoscopy Suite through the glass doors.

- **MSK Monmouth**
  
  480 Red Hill Road
  
  Middletown, NJ 07748

- **Manhattan Endoscopy Center**
  
  535 5th Avenue (entrance on 44th Street between Madison and 5th Avenue)
  
  New York, NY 10017

What to expect

Once you arrive
Once you arrive, you will be asked to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. This is for your safety. People with the same or similar names may be having procedures on the same day.

After changing into a hospital gown, you will meet your nurse. They will place an intravenous (IV) catheter into one of your veins, usually in your hand or arm. The IV will be used to give you anesthesia (medication to make you sleep) during your procedure. You may also get fluids through the IV before your procedure.

You will talk with your doctor before your procedure. They will explain the procedure and answer your questions.

**During your procedure**

When it’s time for your procedure, you will be brought into the procedure room and helped onto an exam table. You will be attached to equipment to monitor your heart, breathing, and blood pressure. You will also receive oxygen through a thin tube that rests below your nose. A mouth guard will be placed over your teeth to protect them.

You will get anesthesia through your IV, which will make you fall asleep. Once you’re asleep, your doctor will pass the endoscope through your mouth, down your esophagus, into your stomach, and into your small intestine. Your doctor will take biopsies if needed, then remove the endoscope.

**After Your Procedure**
Your nurse will continue to monitor your heart, breathing, and blood pressure. You may feel soreness in your throat. If you do, it should go away in 1 to 2 days.

Once you’re fully awake, your nurse will remove your IV. If you have someone waiting with you, your nurse will explain your discharge instructions to both of you before you go home.

**At home**

Don’t drink alcoholic drinks for 24 hours after your procedure.

**Call your doctor or nurse if you have:**

- A fever of 101 °F (38.3 °C) or higher
- Chest pain or shortness of breath (difficulty breathing)
- Severe pain, hardness, or swelling in your abdomen (belly)
- Blood in your vomit
- Weakness, faintness, or both
- Any other questions or concerns
If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.