

# Gastric emptying test

Information for patients



## What is a gastric emptying test?

**This test evaluates how long it takes for food to leave your stomach.**

**It can help identify disorders such as gastroparesis where there is an abnormal function of muscles or nerves that control the stomach's contractions, causing delaying emptying into the small intestine.**

To do this you will eat a small meal containing a safe chemical ( $^{13}\text{C}$ ) which is digested with the food and excreted by your lungs.

We will measure how much of the chemical is in your breath over time which enables us to assess how well your stomach is emptying.

## Are there any risks associated with your test?

There are no associated risks with your test.

## What preparation is required for your test?

### For 2 days before your test

-  **Do not take pro-motility agents**  
Domperidone, azithromycin etc.
  -  You can continue taking any other essential medicines.
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### The day before your test

-  **Do not take antacids**  
Gaviscon, Milk of Magnesia, Rennie etc.
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### For 6 hours before your test

-  You must stop eating and drinking and fast for 6 hours before your test.

## The day of your test

-  You can have small sips of water (maximum of 300 ml) until the start of your test.
-  You may take your essential medicines with a small amount of water.
-  You may brush your teeth, but please try not to swallow any toothpaste.
-  Do not eat, drink, chew gum, smoke, eat breath mints and/or other sweets on the morning of or during of your test.
-  If you are diabetic requiring insulin or diabetes medicine, please ask your doctor if you should change your morning dose. Oral hypoglycaemic medicines are usually not taken that morning until completion of the test and you start eating again.

Key



Do



Do not



Additional info

## What happens during your test?

- 1 Your physiologist will explain your test to you, ask you questions about your symptoms and confirm that you have had nothing to eat in the 6 hours prior to your test.
- 2 You will be asked to give a baseline breath sample by blowing into a foil bag.
- 3 You will then be given a small meal of either porridge or scrambled egg on bread to eat. The meal contains a safe tasteless traceable compound  $^{13}\text{C}$ .
- 4 Breath samples will then be collected every 15 minutes for up to 4 hours and 30 minutes. Please do not eat, chew gum, smoke, sleep or exercise during your test.

 **Your test will last 4 hours and 30 minutes.**

 After your test you are free to return to your usual diet, medication and daily activity.

## How will I get my results?

Your results will be sent by secure email to both you and your referring consultant/doctor. We aim to send out all patient results within five working days of completion of your test.



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