

## GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE (GERD)

# Getting Tested

There are many tests for gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Not all patients with heartburn or GERD need testing. Your doctor **may choose to do one or more tests** to find out if GERD has hurt your esophagus (the tube that links your mouth and stomach) or is causing your symptoms.

**Testing can also help your health-care team guide your treatment.**

### Endoscopy With or Without Biopsy

- An endoscopy is done to look inside your esophagus (tube linking your mouth and stomach) and small intestine, and to do a **biopsy** (taking a small piece of the tissue to look at under a microscope).
- You will be given medicine to block pain and make you feel relaxed and sleepy, so you won't feel much during the test.
- During the endoscopy, your gastroenterologist will use a long, thin (about the width of your little finger), flexible tube with a tiny camera on the end to look inside.
- The tube is passed through the mouth into the small intestine as your gastroenterologist does a careful exam.
- To learn more about endoscopy, **visit [gastro.org/Patient-Care](http://gastro.org/Patient-Care).**

**Other tests may be performed in special situations or if symptoms are hard to control.**



## Esophageal Manometry

- Manometry checks if the valve between your stomach and esophagus, that is meant to close after you eat (the lower esophageal sphincter), is weak.
- Manometry also **checks to see if the rest of the esophagus is working the right way.**
- During the test, a small, thin tube will be put through your nose and down your esophagus. This does not get in the way of your breathing.
- Once the tube is in place, you will be asked to swallow small amounts of water or gel as the machine records esophageal movements.

## PH-Impedance Monitoring

- This test is to find out if you have abnormal reflux and if reflux is causing your symptoms.
- **It is very important to ask your doctor what medicines you should or should not take before and during this test.**
- The test goes on for 24 hours while you do your normal activities.
- This test is most often done in an outpatient center, often after an upper gastrointestinal (GI) endoscopy.
- A very thin tube with recording electrodes on it is put through your nose and down your esophagus. The tube detects reflux and measures the pH (acid levels) in the esophagus and sends the data to a recorder that you need to carry with you.
- Keeping a diary of what you eat, when you eat and how you feel is very important during the test.



## Wireless Esophageal pH Monitoring

- This test is like the other pH monitoring test, except there is no tube coming out your nose.
- **It is very important to ask your doctor what medicines you should or should not take before and during this test.**
- During an upper GI endoscopy, your doctor will attach a small capsule to the inside of your esophagus.
- The capsule will measure the acid levels in your esophagus and send the data to a receiver that you need to carry with you for 48–96 hours.
- Keeping a diary of what you eat, when you eat and how you feel is very important during the test.
- Your doctor will give you specifics on what to do.

## Barium Swallow and Upper GI Series

- **This test is an X-ray that takes pictures of the esophagus, stomach, duodenum and small intestine.**
- You will need to drink a chalky liquid called barium while X-ray pictures are taken. The barium makes it easier for the doctor to see.
- These pictures can be used to make a diagnosis and plan more specific treatments.

### GERD – What to Know:

- ▶ GERD is a health problem that does not go away after a few weeks.
- ▶ The main symptom of GERD is heartburn.
- ▶ Medications or changing certain eating habits can help ease the symptoms of GERD.
- ▶ If not cared for, GERD could lead to other health issues.

