

Oesophageal 24-hour pH and impedance tests

Information for patients



What is an oesophageal 24-hour pH and impedance test?

The oesophageal 24-hour pH and impedance test provides information about gastro-oesophageal reflux disease and helps to determine if this is causing your symptoms.

Gastro-oesophageal reflux can occur if the ring of muscle at the base of your oesophagus is not as strong as it should be. This allows acid and other stomach contents to come up into your oesophagus which can cause symptoms such as heartburn, regurgitation, belching or cough.



The test involves inserting a small tube through your nose, down your oesophagus and into your stomach. This will measure any acidic or non-acidic reflux you get over a period of 24-hours and how it relates to your symptoms.

Are there any risks associated with your test?


There are no serious frequently occurring risks associated with your test. Minor risks can include a sore throat and in rare cases, nosebleed. Very rarely, during insertion, the tube may enter the voice box (larynx) and cause you to cough. When this happens, the problem is quickly recognised, and the tube will be gently moved back a few centimetres.

What preparation is required for your test?


For 5 days before your test

-  **Do not take proton pump inhibitors (PPIs)**
Losec, Nexium, lansoprazole, omeprazole, esomeprazole etc.
-  You can continue taking any other essential medicines.


For 2 days before your test

-  **Do not take H2 receptor antagonists**
Zantac, Tagamet, ranitidine etc




The day before your test


-  **Do not take antacids**
Gaviscon, Milk of Magnesia, Rennie etc.


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 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.


 As you will be going home with the pH probe in place wearing certain clothes will make your life easier when getting changed. Try to wear trousers/skirts and loose tops/t-shirts, dresses and tunics should be avoided if possible.


What happens during your test?


 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.


 Your nostril and throat will be numbed with an anaesthetic spray/cream while you are sitting upright. A thin tube is passed through your nostril, down the back of your throat into your oesophagus and stomach, while you swallow water. Once in position, the tube will be taped to your nose for the duration of the study.

 The tube is then attached to a recorder which measures oesophageal and stomach pH. You will need to wear this for approximately 24 hours. Your physiologist will explain how the recorder works and the buttons you need to press and when. You will need to press buttons if you experience symptoms, when you have anything to eat or drink, and when you are lying down.

 The recorder cannot get wet, so it is important you do not bath or shower during the 24-hour study.

 **Your test will last 30 - 45 minutes.**

 You are free to leave straight away after your test and return to your usual diet, medication and daily activity.

 You will need to return to the clinic 24 hours later to have your tube removed which takes 5 – 10 minutes. You can choose to take the tube out yourself and send it and the recorder back to us using a freepost envelope.

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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