



DIAGNOSTIC AND INTERVENTIONAL ENDOSCOPY • ERCP • CAPSULE ENDOSCOPY • ACNES

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Why do I need a Gastroscopy? FAQ

Q: My GP referred me for a colonoscopy only but your practice recommended adding a gastroscopy as well. Why is that?

A: There are many conditions where the answer may not be entirely obtained just from a colonoscopy. Let's go through a few examples:

- **Iron deficiency**, which is an indication of blood loss. The main concern in patients over 40 years old with iron deficiency is bowel cancer. That risk is between 5% and 30%. This means the vast majority of patients will have another cause. This includes stomach ulcers, cancers, coeliac disease, Crohn's disease of the upper gastrointestinal (GI) tract and so on. These diseases can only be diagnosed with a gastroscopy which is an examination of the upper GI tract. If a patient only has a colonoscopy and that turned out to be normal, the patient will have to return on another day for the gastroscopy. This means extra costs, another episode of sedation which increases the risks of complications and delays the potential diagnosis and treatment of the underlying condition.
- **Diarrhoea**. This is a SYMPTOM with many potential possible diagnoses. A colonoscopy will only reveal about half of them. It is highly recommended that a gastroscopy is performed at the same time to avoid repeat sedation and delays in diagnosis.
- **Vague abdominal symptoms**. The stomach and intestines do not have their own specific pain sensors. The only way for the GI tract to notify us that there is a problem in there is by the "referred" pain pathway. This means "hijacking" the sensory nerves of another organ and sending a signal to the brain. Therefore, the possible diagnoses of vague abdominal pain is very extensive and our Drs have to cast a wide net. Doing a gastroscopy together with your colonoscopy reduces the number of sedations and risks of the procedures and brings us one step closer, quicker, to the diagnosis.

Bottom line: We aim to obtain the answers to your symptoms with the minimum number of sedation episodes and costs.