

Level 1

Endoscopy

KEY POINTS:

What is an endoscopy?

- An endoscopy is a procedure to view the esophagus, stomach and the first part of the small intestine called the duodenum. During an endoscopy, a flexible tube with a camera at the end, called an endoscope, is inserted into the mouth and moved to the duodenum. The doctor is then able to take biopsies (tissue samples) from the duodenum.
- The microscopic review of these biopsies by a pathologist can help confirm whether or not a patient has celiac disease. This is regarded as the standard for diagnosing celiac disease.¹
- A gluten-free diet can reverse the damage caused by celiac disease. Therefore, a patient should ideally be on a gluten-containing diet before having an endoscopy for diagnosis of celiac disease.
- The test is performed on an outpatient basis and does not require admission to the hospital. It is a relatively safe and common procedure with very few complications.
- The test is performed on an empty stomach after providing sedation through the peripheral veins. Therefore, a patient will need to ask someone to bring him/her home after the procedure.
- The test takes about 15 – 20 minutes.

TAKE HOME MESSAGES:

1. Endoscopy is the gold standard used to diagnose celiac disease.
2. You should be on a gluten-containing diet in order to obtain valid test results.

References:

1. Rubio-Tapia A, Hill ID, Kelly CP, Calderwood AH, Murray JA. ACG Clinical Guidelines: Diagnosis and Management of Celiac Disease. Am J Gastroenterol. 2013 May;108(5):656-76.

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