



When is Testing Appropriate?

Approximately 20% of Americans suffer from heartburn—the most common symptom of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). If left uncontrolled, chronic (long-term) heartburn can result in serious health problems, including:

- Esophagitis – erosions and ulcers in the lining of the esophagus)
- Barrett's esophagus – abnormal cells in the esophagus, a risk factor for cancer of the esophagus
- Strictures – scarring of the lining of the esophagus
- Esophageal cancer

When medication or lifestyle changes don't alleviate the symptoms of GERD, your doctor may order tests to confirm a diagnosis and check for other problems.

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Heartburn, GERD, & Reflux Testing

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Esophageal Motility Study (Manometry)

The esophagus is a long, muscular tube (sometimes called the "food pipe") that connects your throat to your stomach. Esophageal manometry will help us find out how the muscles work in your esophagus while you're swallowing, including the:

- Rhythmic muscle contractions that occur in your esophagus when you swallow
- Force and coordination of esophageal muscles as they move food to your stomach

Your nose and throat will be numbed. A small tube containing pressure sensors will then be placed through your nose, down your esophagus, and into your stomach. You will be asked to swallow water several times until the tube is removed.

The test will take about one hour to complete.

Preparing for the test

Do not eat for at least eight hours before the test or drink six hours before the test. Do not take any medications on the day of the test, including blood pressure medication, heart medication, and muscle relaxants. Do not take Reglan (Metoclopramide) 48 hours before the test. Do not smoke for at least two hours before the test. **Plan to arrive 30 minutes before your test.**

After the test

You may feel a temporary sore throat after the test. Lozenges or gargling with salt water may help. Please call your physician if you experience any new or increased chest pain, difficulty swallowing, shortness of breath, or an elevated temperature.

Wireless Esophageal pH Monitoring (BRAVO)

Wireless Esophageal pH Monitoring, also known as Bravo pH monitoring, is a capsule-based test for identifying the presence of acid reflux. The test measures acid exposure in the esophagus, counts the number of reflux episodes you have, and allows your doctor to measure whether or not your symptoms are caused by gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

The Bravo capsule is inserted in the esophagus during an upper endoscopy and the patient will wear a small receiver to record the data from the capsule for 48 to 96 hours after testing. Approximately 95% of patients have no sensation that the Bravo has been placed.

When the specified period of the test is complete, you will return the receiver and the diary. The information from the receiver will help your doctor diagnose GERD and the appropriate treatment, if necessary. The capsule will automatically detach and move through your digestive system a few days after the test.

Preparing for the test

Do not eat for at least eight hours before the test or drink six hours before the endoscopy procedure in which the Bravo will be inserted.

Your doctor will instruct you on how to take your acid suppressing medications, but in most cases, you will be asked to discontinue use of the following medications prior to testing; in order to achieve the best test results, we need your acid build-up to be at its worst. Discontinue use of heartburn relief medications such as Prilosec, Prevacid, Nexium and Aciphex for at least five-to-seven days prior to testing. Discontinue use of Tagamet, Zantac, Pepcid, Carafate and antacids (Maalox, Rolaids, Tums, etc.) at least 48 hours prior to testing.

Barium Swallow/UGIS (Upper Gastrointestinal Series)

A barium swallow study can show if you're experiencing reflux while standing up or lying down. It can also show any abnormalities, such as a hiatal hernia.

This study is a series of X-rays of the esophagus, stomach, and the first part of the small intestine, called the duodenum. X-rays are taken during and after drinking contrast material called barium. The barium solution is a thick, chalky, milkshake-like liquid that coats the inside lining of your GI tract, making it more visible on the X-rays.

Preparing for the test

Do not eat for at least eight hours before the test or drink six hours before the test.

Additional Testing

Depending on your symptoms, your physician may order additional testing, including:

- EGD (Esophagogastroduodenoscopy)
- Abdominal Ultrasound
- Gastric Emptying
- CCK (Cholecystokinin)
- HIDA Scan

