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Patient Information Regarding Esophageal Motility

What to expect during the procedures

Esophageal Manometry

The patient is seated on the side of a bed. Numbing medication is applied to the lining of the nose. Occasionally an intravenous line is started in the patient's arm, and a medication is given, to temporarily mimic some of the symptoms the patient has been having. A thin, flexible tube (motility probe), with pressure sensors at different locations, is passed through the nose and into the esophagus. As the probe is slowly pulled back through the nose, the sensors measure pressures at several different locations in the esophagus. The entire procedure takes about 30 to 45 minutes. There may be slight nasal discomfort after the test. The information is transmitted to a computer that records the pressures on graphs, and then analyzes the information. The record is sent to the doctor, who reviews the information. He/She may outline a specific treatment plan or, if the exam is normal, may determine that further study is necessary.

A 24-hour esophageal pH study

The patient is seated on the side of a bed. A very thin, wire-like, flexible tube (pH probe) is lubricated with numbing medication, slowly passed through the nose and into the esophagus, positioned at the correct depth, and taped in place. The probe has sensors at two different levels, and is attached to a small monitor, about the size of a transistor radio. After receiving an explanation of how to maintain a written diary-noting such things as meal times, activities, and symptoms-the patient go home, wearing the monitor as one would a small purse. For the next 24-hours, the patient lives normally, performing all usual activities, eating normally, and correctly completing the diary, then returns to the facility, where the probe is removed. Removal takes only a few moments. The patient may experience slight nasal discomfort while the probe is in place, and perhaps for a while after it is removed. The information on the monitor and diary is transferred into a computer, which analyzes the data. The physician then evaluates and interprets the information.

The day of the test please remember to bring a list of your current medications. You will not be sedated for the test and do not require a driver.

The esophageal motility tests assist the physician in diagnosis and treatment of your problem. If you have any questions about the test ordered, do not hesitate to call our office at 205-271-8000.