



Supporting Documentation
On Gastric Lavage

Medical Encyclopedia: Gastric Suction

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003882.htm>

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Alternative names

Gastric lavage; Stomach pumping; Nasogastric tube suction

Definition

Gastric suction is done to empty the contents of the stomach. The purpose of gastric suction is usually for tests, or for removal of materials such as poisons.

How the test is performed

A tube is inserted through the nose or mouth, down the esophagus (food pipe), and into the stomach. Sometimes a numbing medicine may be given to minimize irritation and gagging as the tube is being inserted.

Stomach contents can be removed using suction immediately, or after spraying water through the tube.

How to prepare for the test

In an emergency setting, such as when a patient has swallowed poison or is vomiting blood, no preparation is needed for gastric suction. When it is done for the purpose of testing, your doctor may ask you not to eat overnight, or stop taking certain medications.

How the test will feel

You may feel a gagging sensation as the tube is passed.

Why the test is performed

This test may be performed for several different reasons, including:

- Removing poisons, toxic materials, or overdosed medications from the stomach
- Cleaning the stomach prior to an upper endoscopy (EGD) in someone who has been vomiting blood
- Collecting stomach acid for tests
- Providing relief and decompression in someone with intestinal blockage

What the risks are

There is a very small risk of the tube being accidentally placed into the airway instead of the esophagus.

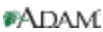
Other small risks include the following:

- Aspiration of gastric contents
- Perforation of the esophagus
- Minor bleeding

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