



Gastroenterology Associates of Orangeburg, P.A. DIGESTIVE ENDOSCOPY CENTER

Adult Ambulatory pH Monitoring A Guide for Patients

pH monitoring measures the degree of acidity of the stomach acids that reflux into the esophagus. The esophagus is a long muscular tube that connects the mouth to the stomach. Its muscular action helps propel food to the stomach where it can be digested by gastric juices and acids secreted by the stomach for that purpose. Before connecting to the stomach, the esophagus has a sphincter that acts as a valve to keep stomach contents from backing up (refluxing) into the esophagus. Normally, that sphincter remains closed, except during swallowing. When the sphincter remains in an open position longer than it should, or if it opens at the wrong time, or if it does not close completely, food and stomach acids pool in the esophagus and cause damage.

What is Esophageal pH monitoring?

A pH probe is a thin, soft flexible tube which is inserted down through the nose to the stomach, and is then pulled back to sit in the esophagus, just above the sphincter to the stomach. The procedure is not painful, but may be slightly uncomfortable as the probe passes down the nasal passage to the back of the throat. Once you feel the probe at the back of your throat during its insertion, you will be asked to start swallowing a glass of water using a straw, thereby aiding the passage of the probe into the stomach. Once the nurse positions the probe in its proper place above the stomach sphincter, the probe will be connected to a small computer where it will record the acid levels in your esophagus over the next 24 hours. The probe is taped securely in place, up to and over the ear.

The passage of the probe will take about 5-10 minutes. You should plan to spend another 15 to 30 minutes with the staff after that to go over specific instructions

This computer-recorder is as small as a portable radio. While the probe is in place, you are required to continue all your normal activities, unless otherwise directed. You will be allowed to drive home after the probe has been inserted.

- You will be given a diary to record all your meal times, what time you went to bed and woke up, plus any reflux, coughing, difficulty in breathing, heart burn, or nausea symptoms you may have.
- You are **not** allowed to shower, bathe, or swim as the computer-recorder is connected to your probe throughout the entire test.

• You should plan to wear a shirt or blouse that buttons down the front and skirt or trousers for your appointment. DO NOT tuck your shirt into the pants.

• PLEASE GO BACK TO YOUR NORMAL ROUTINE. Do not take the day off or lie in bed. This will cause useless readings. We want to know the type of reflux episodes you experience on a typical day.

Instructions:

- Do not eat or drink after midnight prior to the test. Please come on an absolutely empty stomach
- Your doctor will inform you if you should withhold or continue your acid suppressive medication. Examples include: Prilosec™, Prevacid™, Ptoxin™, Nexium™, Zantac™, Pepcid™, and Tagamet™.
- Liquid antacids may be taken up until midnight of the night before your procedure, **ONLY** if they are absolutely needed
- If you take insulin, consult with your doctor about making any changes in your daily regimen.
- Certain medications should be continued during and before your test: If you take cardiac (heart) and/or anti-hypertensive (high blood pressure) pills, take them as you normally do with small sips of water.
- Avoid extremely hot or cold foods.
- Eat at regular meal times.
- No showers or baths. Sponge baths only. **If you splash water on the recorder you will destroy delicate electronics**
- The computer is delicate. Please handle with care. Do not drop, mistreat, or allow it to get wet. Keep the unit in its leather case at all times. The probe **must not** be disconnected for any reason. **Be sure to use the time on the computer when using your diary for recording your symptoms.**
- No gum, lozenges, or hard candy while the probe is in place.
- Once you return home, be as active as usual and eat regular meals
- Any questions or problems page Dr. Murali by calling (803) 395-2200, Ext-0 and ask for Dr. Murali..