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## Gastric tissue biopsy and culture

Gastric tissue biopsy is the removal of stomach tissue for examination. A culture is a laboratory test that examines the tissue sample for bacteria and other organisms that can cause disease.

### How the Test is Performed

The tissue sample is removed during a procedure called upper endoscopy (or EGD). It is done with a flexible tube with a small camera (flexible endoscope) at the end. The scope is inserted down the throat into the stomach.

Your health care provider sends the tissue sample to a laboratory where it is examined for signs of cancer, certain infections, or other problems.

### How to Prepare for the Test

Follow instructions on how to prepare for the procedure. You will likely be asked not to eat or drink anything for 6 to 12 hours before the procedure.

### How the Test will Feel

Your provider will tell you what to expect during the procedure.

### Why the Test is Performed

This test may be done to diagnose a stomach ulcer or the cause of other stomach symptoms. These symptoms may include:

- Loss of appetite or weight loss
- Nausea and vomiting
- Pain in the upper part of the belly
- Black stools
- Vomiting blood or coffee ground-like material

A gastric tissue biopsy and culture can help detect:

- Cancer
- Infections, most commonly *Helicobacter pylori*, the bacteria that can cause stomach or intestinal ulcers

## Normal Results

A gastric tissue biopsy is normal if it does not show cancer, other damage to the lining of the stomach, or signs of organisms that cause infection.

A gastric tissue culture may be considered normal if it does not show certain bacteria. Stomach acids normally prevent too much bacteria from growing.

## What Abnormal Results Mean

Abnormal results may be due to:

- Stomach (gastric) cancer
- Gastritis, when the lining of the stomach becomes inflamed or swollen
- *Helicobacter pylori* infection

## Risks

Your provider will discuss the risks of the upper endoscopy procedure with you.

## Alternative Names

Culture - gastric tissue; Culture - stomach tissue; Biopsy - gastric tissue; Biopsy - stomach tissue; Upper endoscopy - gastric tissue biopsy; EGD - gastric tissue biopsy

## References

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