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Gastric suction

Gastric suction is a procedure to empty the contents of your stomach.

How the Test is Performed

A tube is inserted through your nose or mouth, down the food pipe (esophagus), and into the stomach. Your throat may be numbed with medicine to reduce irritation and gagging caused by the tube.

Stomach contents can be removed using suction right away or after irrigating water through the tube.

How to Prepare for the Test

In an emergency, such as when a person has swallowed poison or is vomiting blood, no preparation is needed for gastric suction.

If gastric suction is being done for testing, your health care provider may ask you not to eat overnight or to stop taking certain medicines.

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 done to:

- Remove poisons, harmful materials, blood, or excess medicines from the stomach
- Clean the stomach before an upper endoscopy (EGD) if you have been vomiting blood
- Collect stomach acid
- Relieve pressure if you have a blockage in the intestines
- Stop frequent vomiting

Risks

Risks may include:

- Breathing in contents from the stomach (this is called aspiration)

- Hole (perforation) in the esophagus
- Placing the tube into the airway (windpipe) instead of the esophagus
- Minor bleeding, including a nosebleed
- Electrolyte imbalance

Alternative Names

Gastric lavage; Stomach pumping; Nasogastric tube suction; Bowel obstruction - suction

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