

Oesophageal pH monitoring

What is oesophageal pH monitoring?

Oesophageal pH monitoring is a test used to measure the level of acid in your oesophagus (food pipe) over a 24-hour period. It helps determine if you are experiencing acid reflux and how severe it is. Acid reflux occurs when stomach acid flows back into the oesophagus, which can cause symptoms such as heartburn, regurgitation, and discomfort.

What is oesophageal pH monitoring?

This test involves placing a small, flexible tube with sensors through your nose and into your oesophagus. The tube is connected to a recording device that measures the acid levels in your oesophagus throughout the day and night. You will be asked to carry on with your normal activities during the test while keeping a diary of your symptoms, meals, and activities. The results are then used to determine whether your symptoms are caused by acid reflux and how frequently acid is entering your oesophagus.

Oesophageal pH monitoring is often performed alongside **oesophageal manometry**, which measures the muscle function of your oesophagus and the lower oesophageal sphincter (LOS). This combination of tests provides a complete picture of your oesophageal health and can guide treatment.

Why might you need oesophageal pH monitoring?

Your doctor may recommend oesophageal pH monitoring if:

- You have persistent heartburn or acid reflux that doesn't improve with treatment
- You experience regurgitation of food or fluids
- You have unexplained chest pain that isn't related to your heart
- You are being evaluated for gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD)
- You are considering surgery, such as fundoplication, to treat acid reflux

This test is particularly useful in determining if your symptoms are caused by acid reflux or another condition, such as non-acid reflux or oesophageal hypersensitivity.

How do you prepare for oesophageal pH monitoring?

To prepare for the procedure:

- Do not eat or drink anything for 6 hours before your appointment
- Inform your doctor about any medications you are taking. You may need to stop certain

medications, such as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) or antacids, for a few days before the test to ensure accurate results

- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing on the day of the test

Your doctor will provide specific instructions based on your medical history and symptoms.

What happens during the procedure?

Oesophageal pH monitoring is a simple and straightforward test that usually takes around 20-30 minutes to set up. Here's what to expect:

- A numbing spray or gel will be applied to your nose to make the procedure more comfortable
- A thin, flexible tube with acid sensors is gently passed through your nose and guided into your oesophagus. You may feel a brief gagging sensation as the tube passes your throat
- Once the tube is in place, it is secured to your nose and connected to a small recording device that you will wear around your waist or on a shoulder strap
- You will be asked to carry on with your normal daily activities and keep a diary of your symptoms, meals, and sleeping patterns

The tube will remain in place for 24 hours, during which it continuously measures the acid levels in your oesophagus.

What do the results show?

The results of oesophageal pH monitoring provide valuable information about:

- How often acid reflux occurs during the day and night
- How long acid stays in your oesophagus after a reflux episode
- Whether your symptoms are related to acid reflux episodes

Your doctor will analyse the results alongside your symptom diary to create a personalised treatment plan.

Are there any risks?

Oesophageal pH monitoring is a very safe procedure, but you may experience mild discomfort, such as:

- A sore throat or nasal irritation from the tube
- A slight gagging sensation while the tube is in place

These effects are temporary and usually resolve once the tube is removed.

How can oesophageal pH monitoring help?

Oesophageal pH monitoring is a vital tool for diagnosing and managing acid reflux and GORD. It helps your doctor determine the cause of your symptoms and whether they are linked to acid reflux. This information allows for precise treatment, whether that involves lifestyle changes, medications, or further interventions like surgery.

Why choose Birmingham Endoscopy Clinic?

At Birmingham Endoscopy Clinic, we specialise in diagnosing and managing conditions like acid reflux using the latest diagnostic tools, including oesophageal pH monitoring. Our experienced team ensures the procedure is as comfortable as possible and provides clear explanations at every step. We are committed to helping you achieve relief from your symptoms and improve your quality of life.

Contact us

If you are experiencing persistent heartburn, acid reflux, or other oesophageal symptoms, contact Birmingham Endoscopy Clinic today to book your consultation. Early diagnosis and treatment can make a big difference in managing your symptoms and protecting your oesophageal health.