

Esophageal Manometry

What is esophageal manometry?

Esophageal manometry is a procedure that measures the strength and function of the muscles in your esophagus (the food pipe) that work to push food and liquids from the mouth down to the stomach.

How is esophageal manometry performed?

At the start of the procedure you will be sitting upright. One nostril is anesthetized with a numbing lubricant. A thin flexible plastic tube approximately 1/8th (one-eighth) inch in diameter is passed through the anesthetized nostril, down the back of the throat and into the esophagus as you swallow. With further swallowing the tube is passed down into the stomach. There may be some gagging during some of the passage, but it is easily controlled by following instructions. Occasionally the tube is passed through the mouth and not the nose.

With the tube inside the esophagus you will lie down on your back. After a short rest to allow the pressures to equilibrate, the procedure will begin. The pressures generated by the esophageal muscle will be measured when the muscle is at rest and during swallows. During the procedure the technician usually asks the patient to swallow on command with some water (called a wet swallow). Multiple swallows are tested to allow measurement of the lower esophageal sphincter (the barrier to reflux), the esophagus (the swallowing tube) and the upper esophageal sphincter (in the throat). Pressure recordings are made throughout the study and the tube is then withdrawn.

Patients can usually resume regular activity, eating and medicines immediately after the procedure.