

Information for Inpatients about Bronchoscopy

You have been advised to have a bronchoscopy to help find the cause of your symptoms. This leaflet gives you information about the procedure. If it doesn't answer all of your questions please tell a member of staff and they will do their best to give you additional information.

What is a bronchoscopy?

Bronchoscopy is a procedure that enables a doctor to see inside your breathing passages, which include your windpipe (called "trachea"), voice-box (called "larynx"), and the bronchial tubes. This procedure is done with the use of a bronchoscope, which is a slender, flexible tube (like a telescope with a light at the end). The tube is inserted either through your nose or your mouth and passed slowly into your respiratory passages.

Other instruments can be inserted through the tube to take tissue samples (biopsies) or to remove particles or secretions. The bronchoscope allows your doctor to look for any abnormalities.

What happens before the bronchoscopy?

- You will be asked to sign a consent form once the procedure has been explained fully and you feel comfortable with the explanation. Please don't hesitate to ask if you need more information before signing the consent form.
- You will be asked not to eat anything for at least 6 hours before your procedure.
- You will be allowed to have sips of water up to two hours before the procedure.
- You will be given an intravenous sedative.

What does the bronchoscopy involve?

- Your bronchoscopy will be performed in the endoscopy unit.
- A local anaesthetic gel will be inserted into your nostrils. This may cause a bitter taste in your mouth.
- The bronchoscope is inserted into your mouth or nose past the back of your tongue and into the trachea and bronchial tubes.
- As the bronchoscope is inserted it may feel uncomfortable and you may feel the need to cough. More local anaesthetic will be given via the endoscope and this will help your throat to relax. It will also make you cough and this is quite normal. There is plenty of room for you to breathe around the tube.
- Your windpipe, voice box and bronchial tubes are examined.
- The procedure will take about 10 to 15 minutes
- The tube is removed and you will be taken to the recovery room.

What about after the bronchoscopy?

- You may be quite sleepy from the sedation. The sedation may also mean that you forget what has happened during the procedure and what has been said to you.
- A nurse will take your blood pressure and pulse frequently until you are fully awake. Once you are recovered you will be taken back to the ward.
- Because your throat will be numbed it is not safe to eat or drink for at least 1 to 1 1/2 hours in case it is inhaled.
- After the test you may have a slight nosebleed and if you have and a biopsy taken you may find streaks of blood in your phlegm. This will usually pass within 24 hours and is nothing to worry about.
- Any soreness in your throat or a hoarse voice will ease within a day or so.
- Your doctor will tell you the results of the procedure soon afterwards or , if you are discharged, at your clinic appointment which should be within one week..
- If a biopsy or culture was taken, the results may not be available for several days.

Risks

- Side effects from this procedure are uncommon.
- There is a slight risk to teeth and dental work if the endoscope is passed through your mouth.
- You may develop a sore throat and/or sore nose and you may cough up a little blood following the procedure.
- Other complications are rare (less than 1 in 1,000) and include a reaction to the sedative drugs, damage to the airways causing bleeding, breathing difficulties during or after the procedure, and compromised heart function.

If you have any questions about these risks or any of the information in this leaflet, please speak to a member of staff. They will do their best to help you.