

BRONCHOSCOPY

Patient Information

You are scheduled for a bronchoscopy, a visual examination of the trachea (windpipe) and the bronchi (airway leading into the lungs). The procedure is used to diagnose problems, remove objects or secretions blocking the trachea, and remove small growths.

There are two types of bronchoscopes: flexible and rigid. Most procedures use the flexible scope, although the rigid scope is sometimes used in the operating room.

WHO MIGHT HAVE A BRONCHOSCOPY

People who have symptoms of a lung problem may have a bronchoscopy to help make an exact diagnosis. Patients with known lung disease may need this test to check the status of their disease. For comparison, bronchoscopy may also be done on people with normal lungs.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR IT

Before the procedure, you will have a chest x-ray, pulmonary function test, physical exam and blood work. Follow these guidelines to prepare for a bronchoscopic examination:

- Avoid eating or drinking anything **after midnight** on the night before your procedure. This includes all medications and water unless your doctor has given you other instructions.
- On the day of the procedure, bring your current medications.
- Follow any specific instructions about eating or taking a special medication.
- Dress comfortably in clothes that can be folded up, and leave your jewelry and other valuables at home.
- **Have a ride available to take you home.**

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Tell your doctor about any medications you are taking, especially aspirin products, arthritis medications, blood thinners or insulin. Patients who normally take antibiotics before dental procedures may need them before bronchoscopy, too. This should be discussed with your doctor before the day of the scheduled procedure.

A chest x-ray is sometimes performed after the procedure, so women who might be pregnant should report this before the procedure; x-rays could harm the unborn child.

THE PROCEDURE

After you have changed into a hospital gown, an intravenous (IV) line will be started to give you fluid and medication. Before the start of your procedure, a mild sedating (an anesthetic) will be given through your IV line to help you relax. Your throat will be sprayed, and you may also be given a local anesthetic to gargle. During the exam, the bronchoscope will be inserted through your mouth or nose into your throat (larynx, trachea, and bronchus). Because of the anesthetic, the tube should not be too uncomfortable. You will be able to breathe around it.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

The examination takes 30 minutes to an hour. Afterward, you will spend approximately one hour in the recovery area. You will be monitored carefully while the anesthetic wears off. Oxygen may be administered to you through a mask if needed.

You will probably have a sore throat and be slightly hoarse for a while. You may also have a cough. If you had a biopsy, your saliva may have some blood in it. These symptoms are normal and should disappear within a day or two. Your doctor will explain the results soon after the exam and arrange for any follow up care. Most patients can resume their usual activities after 24 hours unless the doctor instructs otherwise.

Because of the anesthetic, you should not drive, operate machinery, drink alcohol, or make major decisions for 24 hours after the procedure.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS AFTER THE PROCEDURE

If you develop a fever higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, take Tylenol every 4 hours as recommended by your physician. If your fever lasts longer than 24 hours call your physician.

If you have a sore throat, take throat lozenges as needed. If you have any of the following, go to the nearest emergency room:

- difficulty catching your breath
- bleeding from your nose
- coughing up blood
- chest pain or chest discomfort

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