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Flexible Bronchoscopy

Procedure Information Sheet

What is Flexible Bronchoscopy?

Flexible bronchoscopy is a visual examination of the breathing passages of the lungs (airways). This test is done so that your doctor can see inside the airways of your lungs, or to get mucus samples or tissue from the lungs.

Why do I need this procedure?

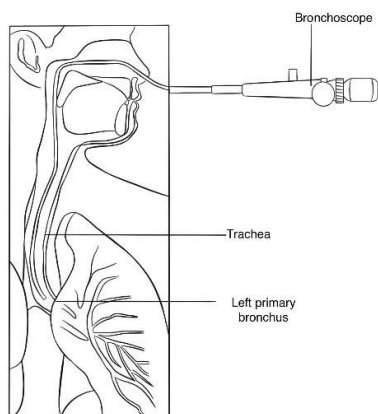
Flexible bronchoscopy is carried out to evaluate symptoms, such as coughing out blood, noisy or abnormal breathing, or to determine the cause of an abnormal chest X-ray.

What are the preparations?

Do not eat or drink at least 6 hours before the procedure. However, you should take medicine for high blood pressure, heart condition or asthma, which you have been prescribed normally, on the morning of your appointment with a small amount of water. If you are diabetic, the doctor will give you special instructions on taking your medication.

How is the procedure performed?

The procedure usually takes about 20 to 60 minutes, with the patient lying down. Moderate sedation, a drug-induced state of reduced consciousness, may be used before and/or during the procedure to help ease discomfort, pain and anxiety. You will be given medicine through an intravenous line. Your heart rate, breathing and blood pressure will be closely monitored throughout the procedure. While most will fall asleep during sedation, some people may be drowsy but have periods of awareness during the procedure. You should feel little or no pain. You may not remember the procedure or have a vague memory of it. Moderate sedation is generally safe. The risks are rare and some possible side effects are: decreased rate of breathing, changes in heart rate and blood pressure, headache, nausea and vomiting and inhalation of stomach contents into the lungs.



Local anaesthetic will be sprayed into your nose and back of your throat to numb the area; it tastes rather bitter. A tube may be placed in your nostril to give you extra oxygen.

A thin tube-like instrument called a flexible fiberoptic bronchoscope is then introduced gently through the nose or mouth, past the vocal cords (voice box), down the trachea (windpipe) and into the bronchi (branches of the airways) of both lungs. You will not feel pain but may experience mild discomfort in your throat and air passages. Your doctor will be able to see the inside of the lungs through the mini-camera at the bronchoscope's tip. Your breathing and blood pressure will be monitored closely throughout the procedure.



What are the risks and complications of the procedure?

Flexible bronchoscopy is a safe procedure. The risk of serious complications, such as bleeding, abnormal heart rhythm and other heart problems, reduced oxygen, air leak and wheezing are less than 0.6%. The risk of lung infection (pneumonia) is about 5%. The reported mortality rate is between 0 to 0.1%. If your doctor performs a transbronchial lung biopsy, i.e., obtains a small piece of tissue through the smaller airways, there is a 5% risk of air leak (pneumothorax) and a 9% risk of bleeding, usually mild.

What do I expect after the procedure?

After completion of the procedure, our nurses will monitor you while you rest. Since your throat is numb from the local anaesthetic, you must not eat or drink for 2 hours or until permitted by the doctor.

After the procedure, you may have a slight nosebleed. If you have had a biopsy, there may be blood staining on your sputum. You may also have a mild fever after a bronchoscopy. These symptoms will usually subside within 24 to 48 hours. Any soreness of the throat or hoarse voice will usually get better within a day or so. After 4 hours, a nurse or doctor will review your fitness for discharge.

If sedation is administered, you may feel slightly drowsy for a short time after the procedure. An adult must accompany you home as the effects of the medication may take some time to wear off. You are advised not to drive a vehicle, drink alcohol, operate machinery, take sedatives (except those prescribed by the doctor), or sign any legal documents during this period.

What are the other Options?

Other tests and procedures, such as X-rays and CT scans, can give the doctor some information about the lungs, but bronchoscopy provides the doctor with more information and allows the doctor to look at the inside of the lungs and obtain concrete samples and remove mucus if necessary. This is why your doctor may schedule a bronchoscopy even after you have had X-rays or other tests.

What will happen if I do not undergo the procedure?

If you choose not to undergo this procedure, your doctor may not be able to obtain essential information to determine the cause or plan the treatment for your medical problem. Your doctor will discuss other options or consequences in further detail if you decline to undergo bronchoscopy.

DISCLAIMER: This information sheet mentions some of the more common or important risks of surgery/ procedure. This list is **NOT** meant to be, and **CANNOT** be exhaustive.

