Bronchoscopy

What is a bronchoscopy?
A bronchoscopy is a procedure where a doctor uses a small fibre-optic camera to look into your large airways (the trachea and bronchi) which are the main tubes which carry air into the lungs.

Why am I having a bronchoscopy?
Your doctor will explain the reason for the bronchoscopy – please ask again if you have not understood. Bronchoscopy is a very useful and commonly used test in lung disease.

What are the benefits?
It can help to diagnose or exclude tumours, and help in the diagnosis of tuberculosis or other infections. It is sometimes helpful in patients who have a chronic cough which has not been explained by simpler tests.

Are there any risks?
The risk of serious complication from this procedure is less than 1 in a 1000. There is a small risk of coughing up blood and medical advice should be sought if this happens.

What are the alternatives?
Additional information can be gained from a CT (computerised tomography – an imaging technique that uses x-rays to generate a three-dimensional image) of the lungs, although this will not always give us enough information to confirm a diagnosis.

What will happen before the bronchoscopy?
• when you are seen in clinic or on the ward, you should be given a date for the test. If this does not happen you will be sent a letter or contacted by telephone to arrange an appointment
• you will normally need a blood test prior to the procedure
• if you are taking any kind of medication to thin your blood (eg warfarin, clopidogrel, dabigatran, clexane or any other heparin based drug) and haven’t been given any advice at your outpatient appointment about stopping/reducing this medication, then please discuss this with your consultant. To do so, ring 01206 747474 and ask to speak with your consultant’s secretary. Your consultant’s name should be on the appointment letter you received
• apart from your medication, you must not eat or drink anything for at least four hours before the test (some doctors may recommend a different period of fasting)
• please bring a list of your medications or your repeat prescription with you to the hospital
• please inform the doctor and nurses if you have any allergies before the bronchoscopy
• make sure that a friend or relative is available to drive you home afterwards
• you must have someone to take you home and stay with you overnight
• remove false teeth before the procedure. If you have any loose teeth or major dental work (bridges, crowns etc) make sure your doctor knows about this. If you have a full set of dentures you may be able to leave them in at the discretion of your doctor.

You should not drive a motor vehicle for 24 hours after the test to be sure that the effects of the sedation have completely worn off.

**When and where does the bronchoscopy take place?**

Date

Please arrive at the Elmstead Day Unit by ________ and bring your medication with you.
If you take medication for diabetes, however, please ring Elmstead Day Unit on 01206 742083.

**What does it involve?**

Most of the time bronchoscopy is done under sedation and local anaesthetic with a flexible fiberoptic bronchoscope. In patients having fiberoptic bronchoscopy, local anaesthetic sprays are put into the back of the throat and local anaesthetic jelly or sprays are put in the nose. These taste slightly unpleasant. As the nose and throat become anaesthetised some patients feel as though they cannot swallow properly. However, they can still swallow and this feeling wears off quickly after the test.

An instrument called a pulse oximeter will be put on one of your fingers. This does not hurt at all. It checks that you have an adequate level of oxygen in the blood. If you are given oxygen to breathe, this is usually with a tube and sponge in the other side of the nose from the bronchoscope. Some sedation is then given through a needle in a vein in the back of the hand or arm. Some patients go off to sleep more or less completely with this; others simply find they feel comfortable and relaxed. The sedation frequently causes some amnesia so many patients don't remember anything about the test afterwards.

**What happens after the test?**

You will be kept in a recovery area for an hour or two after the test. Normally you will be able to go home by 1pm. You may be given oxygen.

You may cough up some blood if you have had biopsies and you should not worry about this unless you are repeatedly coughing up large amounts of blood in which case, please report back to your doctor.
It is not possible to give you the results immediately after the test because any samples taken are processed and examined by the pathologist. Also, because of the amnesia that some patients get from the sedation, many patients can't remember what they have been told when they first recover from the test. Occasionally the bronchoscopy does not provide a diagnosis and may need to be repeated or an alternative test done.

**Consent**
We must, by law, obtain your written consent before any operation and some other procedures. Staff will explain all the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign the consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of your treatment, please speak to a senior member of staff.

**Identification wristbands**
Wristbands are used to identify hospital inpatients. They carry your name, date of birth, NHS number and hospital number. This ensures that staff can identify you correctly and give you the right care.

**Verifying your identity**
When you attend hospital you will be asked to confirm your first and last name, date of birth, postcode and NHS number if you know it, and to let us know if you have any allergies.

**Comments, compliments or complaints about your care**
Please call PALS (Patient Advice Liaison Service) on freephone 0800 783 7328, pick up a leaflet or visit www.colchesterhospital.nhs.uk

**Your views**
If you or a family member has recently been in Colchester General Hospital, you can tell us about your experience by searching for 'Colchester' on the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk, by writing to the address on the front of this leaflet, by emailing your comments to info@colchesterhospital.nhs.uk or by filling in a questionnaire at the hospital telling us if you would recommend our service to a friend or family member.

**Further information**
If you have any queries please contact the Elmstead Day Unit on 01206 742083 or one of the Chest Consultant’s Secretaries on 01206 742006, 742933 or 742179

If you need assistance with transport, please contact the Chest Unit secretaries.

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