



Bronchoscopy

Information for patients

Please note:

- The time on your appointment letter is **the time you need to arrive** at the Day Treatment Centre and not the time you will have your procedure.
- **You may have to wait for several hours** from arrival to the start of your procedure. Please arrive prepared for this. It may be a good idea to bring some reading material.
- **Please inform the department** as soon as possible if:
 - you need a **translator or interpreter**.
 - you take **blood thinners or medication for diabetes**.
- Let the Nurse/Doctor know if you have a **pacemaker, implantable defibrillator, artificial hips or any other metal implant**.
- If you wish to have sedation for your procedure, **please ensure you have someone available to take you home afterward**. If you are unable to arrange escort, inform the endoscopy Nurses as soon as possible.
- Endoscopy is a restricted area, and **relatives/friends are not allowed** to come inside the department. We have a trained team of Nurses and Endoscopists and telephone or face to face Interpreters to help you.
- Please contact the Booking Services team on **020 7288 3822** if this appointment time is not convenient for you or if you are unable to keep your appointment. You can also email whh-tr.endoscopy@nhs.net
- If you have a question about your procedure or medications, please contact the hospital switchboard on **020 7272 3070** and ask for **bleep number 2711** from Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:30. Alternatively you can contact **020 7288 3811/3819** or email whh-tr.endoscopypreassessment@nhs.net. You can also contact the respiratory team on **020 7288 5353/5354** or email whh-tr.respiratoryteam@nhs.net
- Please leave all valuables at home. The hospital cannot accept responsibility for these items and lockers are not available.



What is a bronchoscopy?

- A bronchoscopy is a camera test to examine the airways.
- The instrument used for this test is called a bronchoscope and it is inserted through the nose or mouth. The bronchoscope is made of a flexible fibre-optic material and has a light and a camera at the end.
- The bronchoscopy normally takes around 20 minutes.
- The procedure can be a bit uncomfortable but is not painful.
- You have the choice of using sedation or throat spray (local anaesthetic)

Intravenous Sedation

- A sedative injection and a painkiller will be injected into a vein.
- The sedation will make you feel slightly drowsy and relaxed but will not put you to sleep. You may be aware of what is going on around you and will be able to follow simple instructions during the examination.
- We will monitor your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse and oxygen saturation) throughout the examination.
- **If you decide to have the sedation, you must have someone to take you home.** If you are having difficulties to find an escort, inform one of the endoscopy Nurses using the telephone numbers provided.

Throat Spray

- A local anaesthetic medicine (xylocaine) is sprayed onto the back of the throat to make it numb. It has a very bitter taste but works quickly and is very helpful.
- The spray allows the camera to pass through your throat without you feeling it.
- The benefit of having the spray is that you are fully conscious and aware and can go home unaccompanied soon after the examination.
- The spray will numb your throat for 45 minutes and during that time you will not be able to eat or drink anything.



Why do I need a bronchoscopy?

- You have been advised to have a bronchoscopy to try and find the cause of your symptoms.
- These are some of the reasons for requesting a bronchoscopy:
 - Infection
 - Bleeding (if you cough up blood)
 - Abnormal chest X-ray or CT scan
 - Persistent cough
- A bronchoscopy is a safe examination, and serious complications are extremely rare.
- You need to read this information carefully and weigh up the benefits against the risks of having the procedure.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form before your procedure is performed.

What are the main risks?

- Sedation can cause breathing problems and it is very common for your blood pressure to drop by a small amount, but such problems are normally short lived. You will be monitored carefully during your procedure.
- Bleeding can be caused by trauma from the bronchoscope. This is normally self-limiting and will improve within 24 hours.
- You may have a sore throat temporarily after the procedure.
- The Endoscopist will explain all these risks to you during the consenting process.

What are the alternatives?

- Some of the alternatives are:
 - Breathing test
 - CT scan
 - X ray
- However, the bronchoscopy gives very specific information and allows a Doctor to look inside directly.



What happens before the bronchoscopy?

- **You must not eat anything for at least 6 hours before your procedure.**
- You will be able to have a **few sips of water up to 2 hours before** your test.
- If you do not follow these instructions your procedure will be cancelled.
- **DO NOT STOP ANY OF YOUR REGULAR MEDICATIONS BEFORE THE PROCEDURE UNLESS TOLD OTHERWISE BY THE ENDOSCOPY NURSE OR REFERRING DOCTOR.**

What happens when I arrive in the Endoscopy Unit?

- On the day of the procedure, when you arrive at the unit, you will be asked to complete a short form with personal details and information regarding your current medications. If you are unable to complete the form yourself, someone will help you.
- Please bring any medications that you are currently taking with you, or an up-to-date copy of your prescription.
- You will be seen by a Nurse who will ask you a few questions about your medical history. This is to confirm that you are fit enough to undergo the bronchoscopy examination.
- The Nurse will record your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels. If you are diabetic, your blood glucose level will also be checked.
- The Nurse will also ask you about your arrangements for getting home after your bronchoscopy. **If you have decided to have a sedative, you must be accompanied home.**
- You will be escorted to a designated waiting area where you will wait until the time for your procedure.
- **REMEMBER:** The time on your appointment letter is **the time you need to arrive** at the Day Treatment Centre and not the time you will have your procedure.

What happens during the examination?

- A member of the team will bring you outside the procedure room where the Doctor will explain the procedure and ask you to sign the consent form; here you can ask all the questions that you may have.



- If you have sedation, the Nurses will insert a cannula into your arm. If you opt for the throat spray, the Doctor will give it to you before the procedure.
- The Nurses and Doctor will do some checks before the procedure starts and you will be connected to a cardiac (heart) monitor to safely monitor you throughout the test.
- The Doctor will insert the bronchoscope into your nose or mouth. The bronchoscope is passed down your throat until it reaches the bronchi (airways in your lungs).
- Any secretions/saliva produced during the examination will be removed using a suction tube in the mouth.
- **Please note: Whittington Health is a teaching hospital and sometimes a medical/nursing student can be asked to observe your procedure.**

What happens after the examination?

- The Nurses will continue to monitor your breathing, heart rate and oxygen levels throughout the procedure and afterwards, during the recovery period.
- If you have had a sedative, you may rest for 30 minutes, and we will monitor your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse and oxygen saturation)
- Once you have recovered from the initial effects of any sedation you will be offered some refreshments (you can bring your own food if you wish to do so).
- You should not have any pain after the procedure.
- Before you leave the unit, a Nurse or the Endoscopist will give you a copy of the report and explain what was seen during the examination and whether you need any medicines or need to come back for further tests.
- If you live alone, we recommend that you arrange for someone to stay with you overnight.
- **You must not drive, take alcohol, operate heavy machinery, or sign any legally binding documents for 24 hours following the examination.**
- Most patients feel perfectly back to normal after 24 hours.
- If you still feel drowsy after 24 hours, you should wait a further 24 hours before driving.



After you go home

- **If you experience chest pain, vomiting, high temperature or you cough up blood**, please contact the Endoscopy Department. During out of hours, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.
- For any other queries, you can contact the endoscopy department or the respiratory team:

Endoscopy Department

Tel.: 020 7288 3811/3819

Email: whh-tr.endoscopypreassessment@nhs.net

Respiratory Team

Tel.: 020 7288 5353/5354

Email whh-tr.respiratoryteam@nhs.net

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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