

# Cystoscopy

**i** **Information for patients**  
Spinal Injuries - Urology



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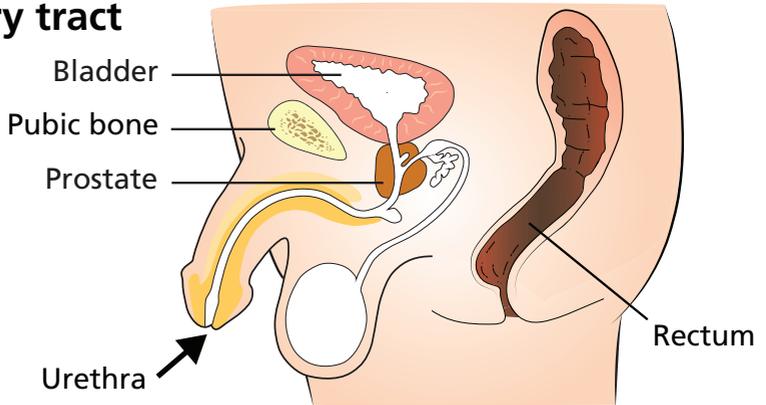
# What is a cystoscopy?

A cystoscopy is a procedure to look inside the bladder using a thin camera called a cystoscope.

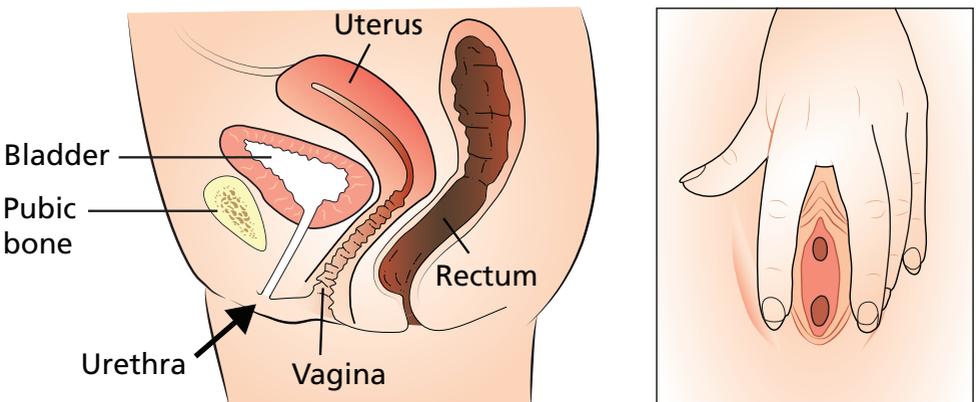
A cystoscope is inserted into the urethra (the tube that carries pee out of the body) and passed into the bladder to allow a doctor or nurse to see inside.

Small surgical instruments can also be passed down the cystoscope to treat some bladder problems at the same time.

## Male urinary tract



## Female urinary tract



## Types of cystoscopy and how they're carried out

There are two types of cystoscopy:

- **flexible cystoscopy** - a thin (about the width of a pencil), bendy cystoscope is used, and you stay awake while it's carried out
- **rigid cystoscopy** - a slightly wider cystoscope that doesn't bend is used, and you're either put to sleep or the lower half of your body is numbed while it's carried out

Flexible cystoscopies tend to be done if the reason for the procedure is just to look inside your bladder. A rigid cystoscopy may be done if you need treatment for a problem in your bladder.

Men and women can have either type of cystoscopy. Ask your doctor or nurse which type you're going to have if you're not sure.

## Why cystoscopies are used

A cystoscopy can be used to look for and treat problems in the bladder or urethra. This can include:

### In the urethra:

- Stretching of the urethra if there are any tight scarred areas, making catheterisation difficult
- Surgical opening up of a tight bladder neck
- Surgically cutting the sphincter muscle to prevent it going into spasm as the bladder tries to empty
- Examination of the area where an artificial sphincter is positioned
- Insertion of a urethral 'stent' (a tube which holds open a sphincter muscle which goes into spasm) in the bladder

## **In the bladder:**

- Small bladder stones may be crushed and washed out
- Biopsies (small samples of tissue) may be taken
- The bladder may be stretched
- The bladder may be washed out to remove debris
- 'Stents' (plastic tubes) may be placed in the ureters (the tubes draining the kidneys into the bladder) to improve urine drainage

## **Does a cystoscopy hurt?**

A cystoscopy can be a bit uncomfortable, but it's not usually painful.

For a flexible cystoscopy, local anaesthetic gel is used to numb the urethra. This will reduce any discomfort when the cystoscope is inserted.

A rigid cystoscopy is carried out under general anaesthetic (where you're asleep) or a spinal anaesthetic (which numbs the lower half of your body), so you won't have any pain while it's carried out.

It's normal to have some discomfort when peeing after a cystoscopy, but this should pass in a few days.

## **Risks of a cystoscopy**

A cystoscopy is usually a very safe procedure and serious complications are rare.

The main risks are:

- a urinary tract infection (UTI) - which may need to be treated with antibiotics. An antibiotic injection is usually given before the procedure to reduce this risk.
- being unable to pee after going home - which may mean a thin tube called a catheter needs to be temporarily inserted into your bladder so you can empty your bladder

There's also a risk your bladder could be damaged by the cystoscope, but this is rare.

You doctor will have discussed these risks with you though please don't hesitate to ask if you have any further concerns or would like further information.

## **Will I need any anaesthetic?**

Cystoscopy may be performed with a spinal, general or local anaesthetic, with intravenous sedation or with no anaesthetic. The urologist or anaesthetist will discuss with you which method is appropriate.

If you have a spinal anaesthetic you must lie flat for 2 hours following the procedure to reduce the risk of a headache.

For further details relating to the risk of anaesthetic please see our separate booklet 'You and your anaesthetic' (PIL213) which is available on our website. [www.sth.nhs.uk/patients/patient-information](http://www.sth.nhs.uk/patients/patient-information).

If you have any anaesthetic or sedation you should not drive a car or operate machinery within 24 hours of the procedure.

## **How long will I be in hospital?**

It may be possible for you to attend as a day case for cystoscopy this can be discussed with your urologist or nurse specialist.

Many patients are admitted the day before their operation, and are discharged on the day after if there are no complications.

## **Is there anything I should look out for when I go home?**

Please remember, whilst this is a minor procedure, any operation and anaesthetic carries some risk.

- It is normal for the urine to burn or sting for up to 2 days after this operation and for it to contain traces of blood. However, if bleeding is heavy or continues for more than 2 days you should contact your GP or the Spinal Injuries Centre.
- Occasionally, a serious infection may occur. If you become unwell with 'flu like symptoms within 24 hours of the procedure, please contact your GP or the Spinal Injuries Centre for advice.

## **Recovering from a cystoscopy**

You should be able to get back to normal quite quickly after a cystoscopy.

You can usually leave hospital the same day and can return to your normal activities - including work, exercise, and having sex - as soon as you feel able to.

This may be later the same day if you had a flexible cystoscopy, or a couple of days after a rigid cystoscopy.

## Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

If you have any concerns you can contact the Spinal Injuries Centre or one of our Urology Nurse Specialists as follows:

### Urology Nurse Specialists

Paula Muter or Carol Eggington:

- **0114 271 5624**
- **0114 243 4343** and ask for Bleep 2494

Marie Watson:

- **0114 226 6823**
- **0114 243 4343** and ask for Bleep 2882

### Spinal Injuries Centre

Ward Osborn 2

- **0114 271 5628**
- **0114 271 5629**

Outpatient Department

- **0114 271 5677**



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